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# ART IN MERICA

*An Illustrated Quarterly Magazine*

FOUNDED IN 1913

VOLUME 33

OCTOBER, 1945

NUMBER 4

## RESEARCH IN AMERICAN ART



## 19<sup>th</sup> Century American Paintings

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HIS special number on *Research in American Art* was planned in cooperation with the American Art Research Council. Mr. Lloyd Goodrich, Director of the Council, served as guest editor. After consultation with members of the Council, he arranged the contents to cover the basic aspects of the subject and then asked leading authorities in each field to contribute the proposed articles. The authors, during the process of writing, have had opportunity to discuss their material and approach with Mr. Goodrich, and to make additions and changes designed to relate each article to the whole. Through this vitalizing editorial process the assembled articles were organically connected rather than merely linked by the skeleton of a coherent table of contents.

The staff of ART IN AMERICA warmly appreciates the generous interest of the American Art Research Council and its Director which made possible this unique issue. We believe our readers will agree that this first rounded discussion of American art research will be a constructive and invigorating factor in the future of American art.

— THE EDITOR

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# ART IN AMERICA · *An Illustrated Quarterly Magazine*

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## Foreword

A GENERATION ago the American artist spoke to a very small audience. America was regarded, both here and abroad, as the step-child of art. Sophisticated people looked askance at our artistic production. To them America was an artistic backwoods. Even our artists, to a large extent, shared this belief, and exposed themselves when they could to European culture.

We Americans are a mercurial race, prone to extremes. From the beginning of our history we have alternated between artistic self-sufficiency and susceptibility to foreign influence. But in recent years we have matured artistically. We have come to realize that while artistic isolation is spiritual death, a healthy art needs roots in its own soil. Artists have discovered that America has as much to offer, in essential human values, as has any other country. It is my own conviction that our art has never been more vital and more in touch with the deeper currents of American life.

During the last twenty-five years interest in American culture has steadily grown. Museums have given our art more than merely perfunctory attention; colleges and universities have recognized this awareness in their new emphasis on courses in American civilization. Historians and critics have concentrated more and more on American history and literature.

In art this tendency has involved a rediscovery of the American past — not only the sanctified past of Stuart's portraits of Washington, but the past of sincere, characterful colonial portraiture, of folk art, of the Hudson River School and the first native genre painters, of neglected individualists like Eakins and Ryder.

This wider awareness of our past has resulted in increased interest in research. The word research, in spite of its forbidding sound, means only more and sounder knowledge of the subjects of our interest. In recent years research in American art has advanced immeasurably in standards of accuracy, completeness and scholarship, and thus today we find more students working in this research field, and with more knowledge and with greater skill than would have seemed possible a few years ago.

The American Art Research Council has accepted with gratitude the offer of ART IN AMERICA to act as guest editor for this issue. We extend our thanks to Mrs. Lipman for this opportunity to present the subject of research in American art for the first time with any degree of completeness. Our thanks are also extended to the distinguished contributors for their generous cooperation.

— JULIANA FORCE



# Fields of Research



## RESEARCH IN AMERICAN PAINTING

By E. P. RICHARDSON

IN 1929 the College Art Association published in the *Art Bulletin* a list of "Books for the College Art Library." On American painting there was a list of forty books, which offers a measure of our problem as well as of what has happened to our perspective on American art in the past fifteen years. The list contained only three general histories, all published before 1915: Isham's *History of American Painting* (first published in 1905), and Caffin's *Story of American Painting* (1907) and *American Masters of Painting* (1913). There were monographs on seventeen artists, of whom six (Bingham, Rimmer, Stuart, Sully, Trumbull, and West) represent the two centuries before 1875, eleven (Abbey, Blakelock, Chase, Homer, Inness, La Farge, Martin, Pyle, Sargent, Whistler, Wyant) represent the late nineteenth century, and only one (Davies) the twentieth. Even as it was, the list marked a considerable gain over that previously published in the *Art Bulletin* in 1920, which suggested only seventeen books. But even though it was restricted to books readily available, it is surprising enough to find only one serious attempt to tell the story of American painting — Isham's — and that out of the 376 American artists mentioned by Isham only seventeen appeared among the monographs, while there were no books at all upon younger artists whom the vigilant and discerning Isham had not already noted in 1905. In other words, the history of the rise and progress of the arts of design in the United States (to use William Dunlap's words of a century before) was not in 1929 a subject for serious study in American colleges and universities.

Since that bibliography was published the situation has changed entirely and we are in the midst of a vigorous and fruitful period of study, out of which a new perspective on our culture is emerging. But I am quite certain that this bibliography is still an accurate image of American painting as it is known to the educated American public — that is to say, an almost complete lack of any general frame of ideas or historical perspective, and a handful of rather mixed names.

My point is not to scold but to emphasize a need and an opportunity. The lack of solid knowledge of our own art is only part of a great weakness — perhaps the greatest weakness — in our culture, which is, as Professor Matthiessen has observed, "that our so-called educated class knows so little of the country and the people of which it is nominally part." The question is not whether we should make our education more nationalistic, but whether culture should separate people from life or equip them to play a more intelligent and feeling part in life. The American intellectuals' lack of roots in our own history and culture is the source of a lack of self-confidence in the face of other cultures which is not only unmanly and unjustified but gives rise inevitably to a blindly nationalistic reaction in the less self-conscious. The need is cultural, therefore, as well as scholarly. The serious, critical study of American art is required not merely to help collectors and museum curators eliminate the mistakes and false attributions which are inevitable in our present state of information, but to enable us to understand ourselves as a people.

Study during the past generation has shown that the history of the rise, progress and achievement of the arts in America is not only culturally important but is filled with artists who do not deserve to be forgotten. In books and exhibitions many interesting questions have been asked. How were the arts established in the new world? Who brought here the professional skills necessary for the craft of painting? What happened to the European forms of art as they were assimilated into the new country? Who were the first native-born artists, how did they discover their vocation and learn their craft; under what conditions did they practise their art, and what did they achieve? The answers to these questions throw light upon the nature of the imaginative life, upon the relation between originality and tradition (a point which is very much misunderstood in modern times) and upon the life of forms in art. How did the art world of today — schools, academies, professional groups, exhibitions, journals, collections, museums, fashions, the whole system of the art market — arise? None of these existed in America one hundred and fifty years ago. How did they come into being? The answers are important not only for the professional history of art and its institutions, but also because they lead to another question we ask too little: what does our society ask its artists to contribute? What is the relation of art in America to the art of the rest of the world? And finally, since all ideas, skills and institutions live in and through individuals, who are the artists of America, what were their lives and achievements, and where can one find their works?

All the rest depends upon our success in answering the last question. In 1834 William Dunlap made a magnificent start with his *History of the Rise and Progress of the Arts of Design in the United States*. Dunlap himself as a painter remains a problematic figure in spite of the valuable exhibit at the Addison Gallery in 1939, but his book throws a flood of light upon the artists at work from the 1780's to the 1830's. Dunlap had great virtues as a critic and historian. Being a painter he was in sympathy with the art of his own day, which as Lionello Venturi has observed, is the first essential of good criticism. He made strenuous efforts to get his information at first hand, from the artists themselves or from those who had known them personally. He traveled fairly widely and was always alert for new facts. He had taste and judgment. The value of his work is fully recognized.

But its limitations are not. Dunlap obviously knew little of the artists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. No one needs to be warned of the need for further information than Dunlap gives upon Feke or Wollaston, for example. But his information on his own contemporaries is so lively and in some cases so full that it creates a false impression of completeness. Dunlap really was well acquainted only with the New York painters. The very significant developments in Boston, Philadelphia and elsewhere he knew only at a distance and often very inadequately. There was much resentment in Boston at the time his history appeared at his misunderstandings of the Boston painters. His record of the Middle States is equally incomplete. Dunlap's geographical limitations have shaped the perspective of histories of American art down to our own time. Moreover, his brief and general biographies of his contemporaries have often never been filled in. One example is enough. I remember years ago coming upon a distinguished small portrait of Daniel Webster in the Concord, New Hampshire, Historical Society, which was signed "J. Wood, 1824." Joseph Wood died in 1830, as one could learn from Dunlap. But until George Groce and Chase Willett published an account of his life and a catalogue of his work in the *Art Quarterly* in 1940, no study of Wood (other than Dunlap's) existed more recent than his obituary in a Washington newspaper in 1830. There are many other good pictures of that period in our museum galleries by artists about whom our information is still nearly as scanty and as antiquated.

Henry T. Tuckerman's *Book of the Artists* (1867) and other writings play the part of Dunlap's history for the next generation. Although not a painter, Tuckerman had many of Dunlap's virtues. He was a friend of

artists, he had taste and wide curiosity, and he gives us firsthand information of the greatest value about the artists he knew. But again his field of observation was limited, although painting was now more than ever a nation-wide activity. His information on many painters outside his section was accurate but all too scanty, while one looks in vain in him for fuller reports on some of the younger Boston or Philadelphia men mentioned by Dunlap. French's *Art and Artists of Connecticut* (1879), Sheldon's *American Painters* (1879) and S. G. W. Benjamin's *Art in America* (1880) offer a later account of some of the younger men treated briefly by Tuckerman. But the revolution in taste after 1875 — a reaction against the older school, the rise of new forms of naturalism and idealism, and a turning towards European standards — cut short the interest in the men whom Tuckerman describes. Though the general histories were supplemented by a few biographies of artists published by family loyalty, like the autobiography of Chester Harding, the lives of Durand and Allston, or eulogies like Noble's life of Cole, these books were not followed up to any extent by modern biographies, catalogues or critical monographs.

The result is that a great deal of useful work remains to be done. In their first century as a nation, the American people spread from the Atlantic coast to the Pacific, and American life was vigorous, self-confident and diversified. Each city of any size over the whole continent seems to have had some artistic life. It was not a question of New York alone, but of New England and the Middle States, of Washington and Richmond and Charleston, St. Louis and New Orleans and San Francisco. We know only the general outlines — details are sadly lacking. Dr. J. Hall Pleasants' essay on "Four Late Eighteenth Century Anglo-American Landscape Painters" in the *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, and the Baltimore Museum's exhibitions, *A Century of Baltimore Collecting, 1840-1940*, and *Two Hundred and Fifty Years of Painting in Maryland* (1945), show how interesting the study of one such center may be. But, in general, for information on artists outside the New York region one must search in the publications of the historical societies, which is like searching through not one but a whole field of haystacks.

By the time Tuckerman published his history, the Age of Paper had begun. Art magazines began to appear and disappear. (Where can one find a complete set of the files of the nineteenth-century art journals?) With the beginning of the great development of American periodical literature, much criticism, biography and historical research was also published



in general monthlies like the *Atlantic*, *Scribner's*, *Harper's*, *Appleton's* and the *Century*. One must look there for much of the best work (never reprinted) of critics like Margaret Schuyler van Rensselaer, Charles Henry Hart and William Howe Downes. There is thus valuable writing, not yet superseded, hidden away in places which now seem very out of the way — like Hart's series of "Life Portraits of Great Americans" in *McClure's Magazine* for 1896 and 1897.

In the latter part of the nineteenth century a few students became interested in portraiture of the colonial period and the early republic. At first this was largely iconographic, like Charles Henry Hart's articles just mentioned. But American portrait painting has received constant attention ever since. Lawrence Park, whose book on Stuart (1926) was the first great monument of colonial scholarship, unfortunately did not live to fulfill all his promise; but the work has been ably carried on by specialists like William Sawitzky, John Hill Morgan, Charles K. Bolton, Frederic F. Sherman, Harry B. Wehle, Theodore Bolton, J. Hall Pleasants, Alan Burroughs, Barbara N. Parker and Louisa Dresser. Staffs of museums have played their part, but equally important has been the contribution of independent connoisseurs. Some of their research has appeared as monographs or catalogues raisonnés, but much of it remains in periodicals or the publications of historical societies. Since the pioneer efforts of a generation ago, standards of scholarship have constantly advanced, until today the same kind of accurate and thorough research is being applied to this field as to any other historic period of the world's art. The results in this one American field where solid and continuous work has been done, show not only in the recent fruitful extension of study into the seventeenth century, but in the appearance at last of general studies like those of Alan Burroughs, Oskar Hagen and J. T. Flexner. Yet with all this, how much remains to be known about portrait painters outside New England and New York! Biddle and Fielding have done a catalogue of Sully; but where are the books on Neagle, on Charles B. King, on W. J. Hubbard, or for that matter, on most of the colonial, classic and romantic portrait painters of the Middle States and the South whose works turn up all the time to raise questions for the collector and curator?

One of the chief developments of recent years has been the extension of scholarship to nineteenth-century American art. In this as in everything artistic, changing taste has played a part. The artists whom Tuckerman knew and admired — the Hudson River School, the early genre painters, the mid-century portraitists — but who were rejected by the sup-

posed sophisticates of the 1880's and 1890's, have been rediscovered by our generation. Studies like Bartlett Cowdrey's and Hermann Williams' on Mount, John I. H. Baur's on Quidor and Eastman Johnson, Lloyd Goodrich's on Eakins, Homer and Ryder, Parker Leslie's on Cole, or the writer's on Washington Allston, are, it is to be hoped, only the first of many in this most neglected and most rewarding field. The founding of the American Art Research Council forecasts the extension of such thorough, definitive study to the artists of our own time. Much of the research in the nineteenth century is still in the form of exhibition catalogues or in the project stage, but a solid beginning has been made.

I would like to emphasize once more the cultural importance of this study. The Americans are today the least known of all the world's great peoples. Their imaginative and cultural life is unknown to the world at large, because it is only partially known to themselves. This lack of attention by our so-called educated classes is a form of betrayal of their function, which is not merely to interpret the rest of the world to this continent, but to understand, to clarify and to render articulate the vast, potent, deep-rooted, mysterious and creative life of the people to which they belong.

## ARCHITECTURAL RESEARCH IN AMERICA

By TALBOT HAMLIN

ARCHITECTURAL interest has been deep and wide in the United States from an early date. To one observing American culture it is an unexpected fact to find this new nation — far from the great monuments of western architecture, and faced with the prime necessity of making a living in a strange land, and later with the tremendous challenge of settling and civilizing that land — producing a flourishing body of architectural writing, apparently widely welcomed, almost from the period of the Revolution.

This early architectural writing was necessarily eclectic and unoriginal. Travel to Europe was as yet infrequent, and generally for business rather than cultural purposes. Even the general aspect of the great buildings of Europe was known to but few; literary descriptions and crude engravings were the only available sources. Thus, when the *Christians', Scholars' and Farmers' Magazine* published in 1790 "The Origin and Process of

Architecture," it could give only the most general sketch of architectural history. Yet such articles, of which this is but one of many, reveal an apparent popular thirst for knowledge about architecture, the presence in the young country of books from which articles could be composed, and occasionally the desire, at least, for a true scholarly approach. However worthless as scholarship, they performed a valuable work of public education, so that later more important writing found an unexpectedly wide audience. In these early times any original approach was necessarily limited to the architecture of America itself, and this architecture was so recent in origin — in fact, was so constantly arising over the country, was so exciting in its very newness — that architectural writing was largely descriptive rather than historical. But it was inevitable that a people so curious about their own building, either so proud of it or at times so apologetic about it, should eventually develop a vital curiosity about its origins, its development, and the trends of European architecture which were its ancestors.

This curiosity began to achieve actual expression with the opening of the 1830's, flaring suddenly into a great number of small flames, like a fire that has been burning underground. One of the largest was kindled by Ithiel Town, architect and bridge builder, who used a fortune he earned with his bridges to form the most important collection of architectural books and of engravings in the country, and one of the largest private libraries of its kind in the world at the time. Town's interests were wide; on his trips to Europe he purchased old and new books, and engravings of buildings and paintings; and he was a pioneer in collecting medieval illuminated manuscripts. His library was said to contain about 10,000 volumes and some 25,000 loose prints. Its scope was very wide, and the books especially were well selected and covered both ancient and more recent art. Of course book collecting is not research, but books are necessary for research, and Town's extraordinary collection shows qualities of mind closely akin to those of the true research worker — curiosity, critical sense, and selectivity devoted to a single field.

But the climax of this early phase of American architectural scholarship was William Dunlap's epoch-making *History*. Original research for Americans at this time was forced to deal chiefly with American material, and certainly Dunlap's insatiable curiosity and assiduous correspondence were a form of real research. He may not have been sufficiently skeptical about the veracity of his correspondents, but his material was the actual result of his own research into the lives and significance of a large num-

ber of American architects and artists of his own time and his immediate past. The importance he gives to architects is a true expression of the feeling of the period.

At the same time American interest was also turning toward the pre-Columbian architecture of the Americas, especially of Mexico. John Lloyd Stephens's travel books of the early 1840's, with amazingly accurate drawings by Frederick Catherwood, show the beginning of a wide interest in Mayan architecture. Here again actual contact with the monuments gave opportunity for a kind of originality seldom shown in dealing with monuments in Europe. This interest also found expression in the lectures, published in 1849, of the younger Robert Cary Long, the Baltimore architect.

## II

The second phase of American architectural research stems largely from Charles Eliot Norton and the enthusiastic worship of Ruskin of which he was one of the chief exponents. This brought with it a turning of interest away from both the ancient world and the American scene to the Middle Ages.

After the Civil War, travel in Europe became ever more common; from the 1870's on, architectural students strove either to make the Grand Tour or to study in Paris. At the same time the development of graduate work in American universities and the building up of libraries combined to set higher standards for research. The influence of German universities, frequently coming indirectly through American professors who had studied in them, was creating a new brand of careful scholarship. Another factor was the establishment in rapid succession of several large professional schools of architecture, beginning with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, in all of which courses in the history of architecture held an important place.

Thus the second phase had a double character — the connoisseur approach of Norton, absorbed chiefly in the emotional content and cultural expressiveness of architecture, and in the work of the Middle Ages; and the basically formal interest of the architectural schools, increasingly devoted to the classic world and the Renaissance.

In addition, the work of two critics of encyclopedic knowledge stands out as unique — Russell Sturgis and Montgomery Schuyler. Sturgis, an early enthusiastic Ruskinian, retired from architectural practice early in life to devote his entire time to study and writing on architecture and art.



With a mind of extraordinary breadth, he had a passionate interest in all forms of creative activity. Works on contemporary architecture or primitive Italian painters flowed from his pen with equal facility. Yet this wide range was not achieved at the cost of accuracy; within the bounds of the knowledge of his time his work stands up with surprising validity.

Montgomery Schuyler came into architectural writing by the side door. Essentially a journalist, his major interest rapidly became architecture. As editor of the *Architectural Record* he made it a periodical of definite scholarly and critical importance, contributing many articles both under his own name and under pseudonyms. His writing shows a deep interest not only in architectural thought as a whole but more especially in the current and past work of the United States. His criticism was both pungent and prophetic. The "Great American Architects" series by Sturgis and Schuyler in the *Architectural Record* from 1895 to 1899, embodies the clearest, most discriminating and honest, and most relentless criticism of the architecture of the day which America has ever produced.

One characteristic distinguishes almost all this second phase of architectural study — the aim not only to acquire factual knowledge, but to create out of it some coherent and meaningful pattern with a vital relation to human living. Occasionally this effort may be naïve, but at bottom it is healthy, and shows a realization that knowledge exists for human use and that architecture is an important factor in the life of mankind. Thus Ruskin's ethical enthusiasm exerted a continuing influence on American architectural writing.

### III

The historical study of American architecture was the result of two quite different interests. The first was antiquarianism, often largely genealogical, which early produced many local histories of churches and families. The second was the curiosity of architects themselves about the work of the past; later, with growing eclecticism, this was buttressed by a search for new style inspirations.

It began, casually enough, in books like the *History of Architecture* by Mrs. Louisa C. H. Tuthill (1848), of which the most valuable sections, on American architecture, show an unusually discriminating critical sense. But of any real sense of the past, of the sequence of stylistic development, there was as yet hardly more than that displayed by Jefferson in his well-remembered strictures on the over-elaborate baroque colonial from which

HISTORY  
OF  
ARCHITECTURE,  
FROM  
THE EARLIEST TIMES;

ITS PRESENT CONDITION  
IN EUROPE AND THE UNITED STATES;

WITH  
A Biography of Eminent Architects,  
AND A GLOSSARY OF ARCHITECTURAL TERMS.

BY MRS. L. C. TUTHILL.

WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS.

Behold these broken arches, that orel all unglazed,  
That crippled line of columns bleaching in the sun,  
The delicate shaft stricken midway, and the flying buttress  
Idly stretching forth to hold up tufted ivy."

M. F. TUPPER

"Some pretend to judge of an individual by his handwriting; but I would  
rather say, 'show me his house.'"—LONDON ARCHITECTURAL MAGAZINE.

PHILADELPHIA:  
LINDSAY AND BLAKISTON.  
1848.

he was trying to escape. Yet this sense began to creep in. A writer in the *Democratic Review* in 1847, commenting on the Gothic churches of his period, hoped that by and by we might be able to build as beautiful churches as we built "a century ago" — a remarkably early appreciation of colonial achievement. Studies of the meetinghouse types as an evidence of Puritan thinking appeared shortly afterward — among the first definite studies of a past American architectural type. Through the '50's and '60's this anti-



SWEDE'S CHURCH

Plate xxiii in Mrs. L. C. Tuthill's *History of Architecture*

quarian interest continued to grow, but not until the '70's did it reach full expression. The widely observed centennial of American independence in 1876 stimulated study of our eighteenth-century past in architecture as in other fields.

The colonializing movement is usually dated from the famous trip through the New England port towns made by McKim, Mead, Bigelow and White in 1877; from this time on, interest in colonial work increased by leaps and bounds. In the 1880's the *American Architect* under the editorship of William P. P. Longfellow began to publish measured drawings of colonial buildings with increasing frequency. William Rotch Ware, its assistant editor and later its editor, had a dominating interest in the colonial. Into this making of measured drawings he drew many of the

most brilliant young architects of the time. Frequently they added to their graphic presentations whatever historical information they could unearth. This mass of material, plus much additional matter, was published in 1901 as the monumental three-volume work *The Georgian Period*, important not only for its careful records of buildings and details, but because it attempted to differentiate between regions, dates, and types, to examine the way colonial architects and builders worked, and to list the almost forgotten names of the architects.

One basic criticism of *The Georgian Period* is that it made little distinction between the colonial, the so-called Federal work of the early republic, and the Classic Revival of the early nineteenth century. It was not until nine years later that Montgomery Schuyler, in a series of articles in the *American Architect* on the early Greek Revival, made the differentiation clear and set historical thinking along almost its present lines. This series, an epoch-making attack on an important phase of our architecture, gives evidence of a tremendous amount of original research.

The basic history of colonial architecture and its offshoots could come only through the merging of sound general historical knowledge with a more careful methodology. This was achieved little by little. H. D. Eberlein's *Architecture of Colonial America* (1915) traced the main patterns correctly, but a sound archaeological basis in which the dating of monuments was arrived at from documentary as well as stylistic sources came only with Fiske Kimball's *Domestic Architecture of the American Colonies and the Early Republic* (1922). Here at last the foundations of present-day research were laid. The myths were largely eliminated, questionable issues clarified, and a body of actually dated material established which could serve as a criterion.

Subsequent research in this field has consisted largely of carrying these methods still further, searching for original architects' drawings and documents, and working out regional patterns as well as chronological sequences. Now we know much more about the complex play of influences between Europe and the colonies, and between the colonies themselves.

#### IV

The foundation of the Archaeological Institute of America in 1879 and its establishment of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens in 1881 marked the official entrance of Americans into the rich field of classical archaeology, no longer known at second hand. From that time



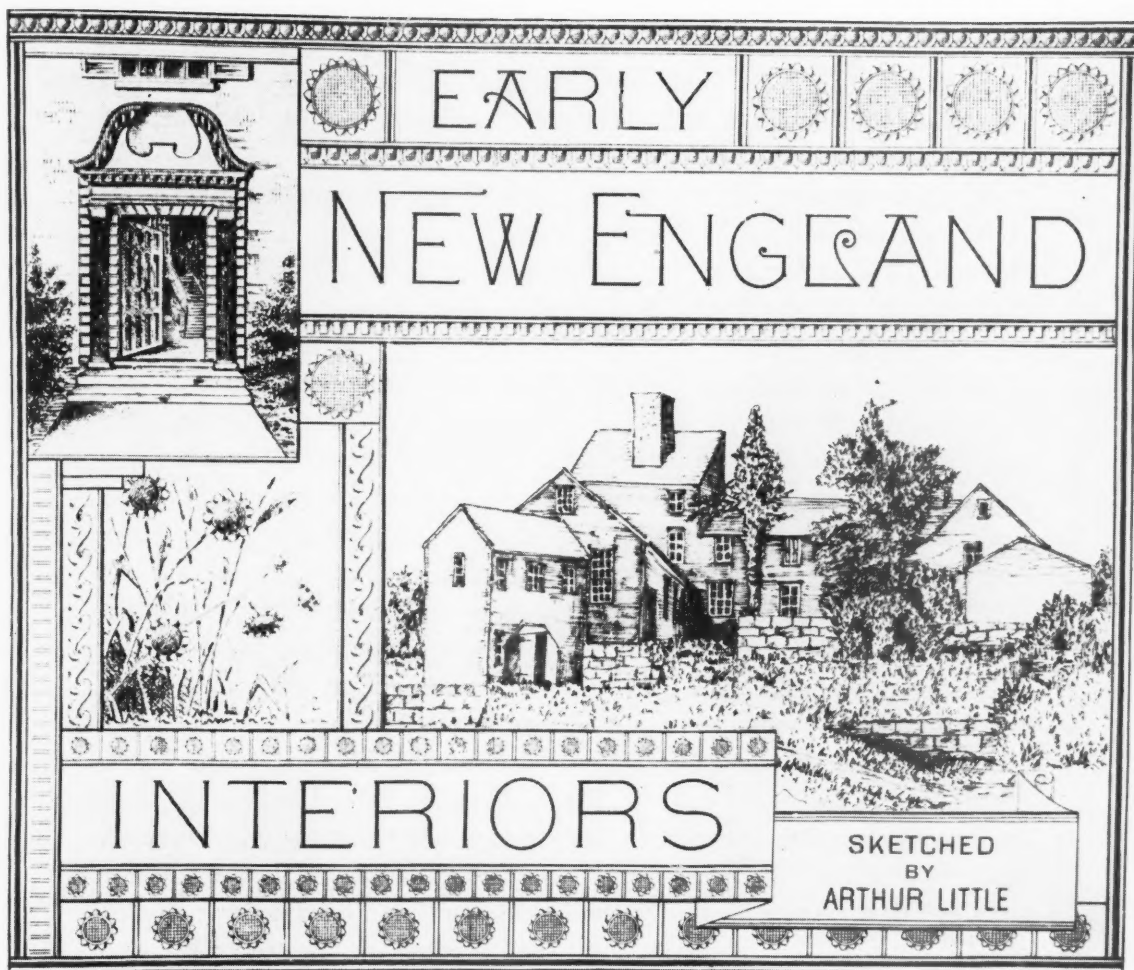


PLATE FOLLOWING TITLE PAGE  
In Arthur Little's *Early New England Interiors* (1878)

on, the contribution of American scholars to our knowledge of Greek architecture has been equal to that of any other nation. Similarly the American Academy in Rome, founded in 1894, although its primary object was not archaeological, became an important center for Italian archaeology. These notable foundations in Greece and Rome enabled American architectural research to become an important part of international classical scholarship.

The development of scholarship was also materially aided by the establishment in 1891-'92 of the Avery Library at Columbia University, given by Samuel Putnam Avery in memory of his architect son, Henry Ogden Avery. Today the library is the largest of its kind west of the Atlantic Ocean and one of the three or four greatest architectural research centers

in the world. The Avery not only has afforded facilities to scholars, but has through its own activities striven to widen and deepen the bases of architectural study.

Another factor in the raising of standards was the enormous development, since the first World War, of graduate university instruction in the fine arts, in which architecture played a major part. The rise of Nazism in Germany brought to this country many internationally famous scholars who found places in our graduate schools, bringing not only their knowledge but their sense of standards and their contagious enthusiasms.

One more influence has increased the amount of present-day architectural research — the enormous impact of the development of modern architecture. The controversies that grew up around great foreign revolutionists like Le Corbusier stimulated curiosity about the foundations of architecture, and turned the minds of many towards a new evaluation of this country's own contributions to the movement. The Museum of Modern Art in its architectural exhibitions has always been thoroughly aware of historical backgrounds and their necessity as a guide to present criticism, and has itself sponsored important architectural research publications, such as Henry-Russell Hitchcock's book on H. H. Richardson and Hugh Morrison's on Louis Sullivan.

This interest, too, tended to focus research more and more on nineteenth-century work. Any careful study of present-day architecture made it apparent that many of its roots lay in the complex interweaving of industrial and artistic developments which had preceded it, and the passage of time itself was tending more and more to direct attention to the nineteenth century, which was rapidly becoming a "past" susceptible to historic research. We are inclined always to be more historically aware of the work of the period of our grandparents than of that of our parents.

The heightened interest in architectural history found expression in the founding of the American Society of Architectural Historians in 1940. Its growth has been extremely significant. Its quarterly *Journal*, though still only multigraphed, has in recent numbers been illustrated with half-tones. Through committees, correspondence, chapter meetings, and articles in the *Journal*, the Society has made itself a center for the mutual assistance of scholars, and offered a place where architectural articles could find dignified if inexpensive publication, at a time when architectural periodicals have almost completely eliminated solid critical or historical writing in favor of style propaganda or the mere presentation of executed buildings.

Recently the Society, known generally as the ASAH, conducted a mail census of its members to discover what architectural research is now under way. Space is lacking to publish here the names of the scholars or a list of their projects. We can only say that they form an impressive proof of the breadth and extent of architectural scholarship in America. Analysis of the results reveals at once an outstanding fact: the new importance that American architecture has achieved as a subject for research. Of forty-nine projects, twenty-eight deal with the United States, four with Latin America, and seventeen with Europe. This, it seems to me, indicates a most healthy reaction against the over stressing of the European field from the time of Charles Eliot Norton down to recent years. Of miscellaneous projects not definitely assignable in other ways, six are biographical, four deal with regionalism, two each with cultural, sociological, and structural factors, and one is purely stylistic.

Another fact is the growing importance of nineteenth-century studies. Of the twenty-eight American projects, fourteen are limited to the nineteenth century; of the seventeen foreign, only four. Twelve deal especially with the Classic Revival, five with the colonial architecture of the United States, and three with the colonial architecture of Latin America. Among the members of the Society, ancient, Renaissance, and oriental architecture are the least represented, each with three; medieval architecture with four.

This survey, of course, covers only the ASAH members, and does not represent the total amount of architectural research in progress. Nevertheless the membership (some three hundred) is widely enough scattered over the country to indicate general trends. The results probably underestimate work by the classic and medieval scholars, who have been less attracted to membership than those dealing with more recent periods. It is, however, rather surprising to find Renaissance and Baroque studies so low in the list when one considers the importance of these great periods in determining later architectural developments.

One interesting result of the survey was a list of research projects, as yet unattacked, which the scholars suggested as worthy of attention. Sigfried Giedion has proposed that a coordinating committee be established, by which research by individuals could be directed to common ends. Many of the untouched fields are of the greatest importance, such as the study of creative nineteenth-century American architecture, especially on the Pacific coast, suggested by both Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Lewis Mumford. The field of industrial architecture has scarcely been touched, and the regional studies are scattered and unsystematic, with noteworthy omis-

sions in New England and the Southeast. Here are wide, open fields for future scholars.

One can only hope that after the war there may be opportunities for adequate publication of architectural studies. Of recent years the greatest obstacle to architectural research in this country has been, not lack of subjects, or of willing and sometimes brilliant workers, or of facilities for study, but the almost total absence of opportunities for publication. Outside of the limited number of articles which the architectural and art magazines can publish, there is literally no periodical market for such work. The condition with regard to book publication is even worse. Commercial publishers almost without exception have been prejudiced against architectural works — especially historical works. Even university presses look askance at such books unless they are backed by whacking subsidies, and the sources for whacking subsidies are limited. It is significant that the greatest single monument of American research, with many architectural connotations, I. N. Phelps Stokes's *Iconography of Manhattan Island*, was published at the author's expense. I believe that this is a most unfortunate and dangerous state of affairs.

In recent years publishers have come to accept painting as a subject worthy of their efforts. By comparison, the amount of architectural publication has been slight. If a census as incomplete as the above, made when many of our most creative young scholars are engaged in war work, reveals so much vitally important research under way, we may confidently look forward to the amount and quality of the work after the war. Is it all to remain in manuscript? Or can the world of learning and the world of publishing get together, to make available the work of present and future scholars? The exact means of bringing this about are still unstudied. Perhaps foundations can be more actively interested, or special funds can be collected from individual donors. Perhaps the public can be educated to buy more architectural books — and it is noteworthy that public demand for them is increasing much faster than the publishers' realization of it. But the problem must be solved, for on it will hinge the future of American architectural scholarship.

# Attribution and Authenticity in American Painting



## STYLISTIC JUDGMENT AND DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

By LOUISA DRESSER

THREE elements are involved in the study and attribution of early American paintings. Most frequently used is stylistic judgment, which in turn should be checked and supported by documentary evidence and scientific examination. The proper association of all three types of approach, whether combined in one individual or the result of collaboration of two or more persons, is essential — and nowhere more so than in the early American field. In some rare individuals an equal interest exists in making stylistic judgments, searching for documentary evidence, and examining pictures scientifically, but more often enthusiasm and ability along one or another of these lines will predominate. This creates an impression that it is a matter for discussion which of the three approaches is the most desirable. Actually they are interdependent and the research worker should be cognizant of the proper use of all three, while at the same time beware of certain dangers associated with each.

The most prevalent of these lines of approach, stylistic judgment, is at the same time the most obvious, the most dangerous, and the least difficult to persuade students to pursue. An inexperienced person, viewing a picture, is often only too ready to express an opinion as to authorship and from this it is but a short step to an attribution. Unfortunately it is a great convenience to have an artist's name attached to a picture, entirely apart from the monetary considerations involved. It finds its place more easily in catalogues; reproductions of it can be filed more simply; somehow it seems to have achieved added significance.

There is a great deal of work to be done in the field of early American painting and there is some danger of its being done too fast. We are all anxious to substantiate our pet theories and to build up the artistic personalities of certain artists. Sometimes this is done without positively establishing, as a basis for comparison, standard pictures, known beyond doubt as representative works by the artist. The standard picture is the



essential cornerstone for stylistic judgment and without it this method of approach is impossible. For example, there is the case of Henry Couturier whose name usually appears in accounts of the early history of painting in New York because, according to his wife's recorded statement, he made portraits of Governor Stuyvesant and his sons. Though attempts have been made to link extant portraits with Couturier's name, so far no picture has been discovered which is incontrovertibly his work and therefore, attribution of other pictures on stylistic grounds is not possible.<sup>1</sup> It would be very helpful if the American Art Research Council or the Frick Art Reference Library would assemble a full photographic record of standard works by early American artists including enlarged details and x-ray shadowgraphs, and accompanied by photostats of whatever documentary evidence is available.

But study of reproductions is, of course, not enough. The originals should be seen, first the standard pictures and then as many others as possible. As William Sawitzky, writing from long experience, points out: "The often-arising questions of authenticity and physical condition, and as to whether a given portrait is an original from life, a replica by the same artist, or a copy by another hand, and if so, of what period — all of such questions can, in the last analysis, be answered only by the individual picture itself." Although part of the large amount of material available "has been garnered by art museums, historical societies, and similar organizations, private collectors and dealers, most of these cultural productions of the past are still in the hands of descendants, and can be seen and studied only by those who are willing to write countless letters, go on trip after trip, explore out-of-the-way places, and ring innumerable doorbells."<sup>2</sup>

Fortunately exhibitions of early American painting are held fairly frequently, bringing as loans from private owners many paintings which are not easily accessible to the student, who is thus enabled to study them under convenient conditions of lighting and position, and to compare side by side pictures which have never before hung together. Last year "Old and New England" at the Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, and "Two Hundred and Fifty Years of Painting in Maryland" at the Baltimore Museum of Art offered excellent opportunities for the development and exercise of stylistic judgment. To assemble in one gallery the positively known and attributed works of an artist is the ideal cul-

<sup>1</sup>New-York Historical Society, *Catalogue of American Portraits*, 1941, 298.

<sup>2</sup>W. Sawitzky, *Matthaeo Pratt*, 1942, 3-4.

mination of the study and definition of his style. Errors in judgment are revealed on the one hand, while, on the other, hopeful attributions are confirmed. In arranging such a "one-man show" care should be taken that lenders of doubtful pictures understand the study to which their loans are to be subjected so that they will not object to the publication of the results. A fine example of this type of exhibition was "John Greenwood in America" organized by Alan Burroughs in 1942 for the Addison Gallery of American Art.

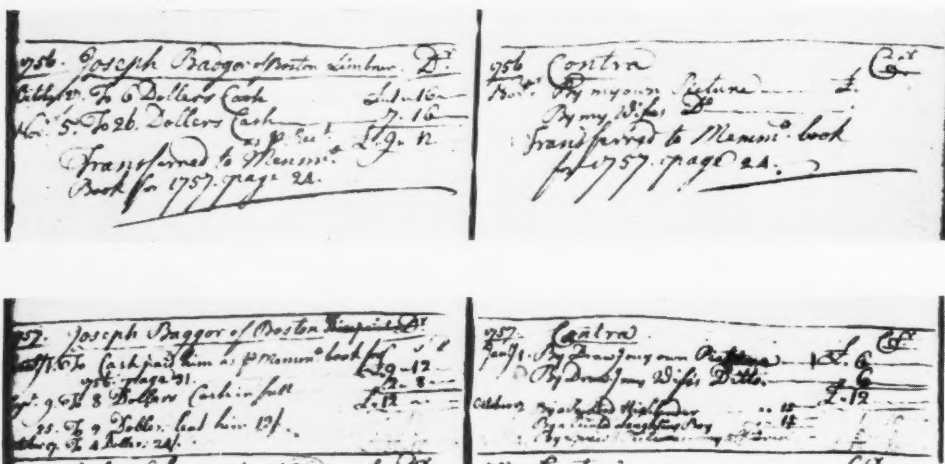
As indicated above, however, the conscientious student must spend much time visiting private houses if he is to develop his eye and background of knowledge properly. Henry Wilder Foote commented when he completed his monograph on Robert Feke that, except for the painter, he was probably the only man who had actually seen all the pictures which he described therein.<sup>3</sup> Of these only twenty-six out of seventy were not in private hands. The student soon learns the value of taking careful notes about every picture he sees even though it does not fit into his immediate program of study. Nothing is more discouraging than to remember vaguely, years later, having seen a certain picture in a remote spot and to find that there is nothing whatsoever in one's files concerning it. An adequate record includes measurements, medium, description with full color notes, signature, inscriptions, condition with evidence of restorations, and any labels on the frame, stretcher, or back of the canvas. All that the owner can tell of the history of the picture should be recorded, as well as any family documents concerning it. The student should also set down his own on-the-spot critical opinion.

Insensibly a sound ability and possibly a real flair (though that may be inborn) for making stylistic judgments will develop. At no time, however, should the student allow himself to think that his opinion is infallible, for experience inevitably brings some changes in earlier attributions. Always he should be alert to the possibility that scientific examination and documentary evidence may confirm or correct his conclusions. Methods of scientific examination are discussed elsewhere in this issue. The purpose of the remainder of the present article is to indicate some sources of documentary evidence and its importance in the study and attribution of early American paintings.

There are occasions when documentary evidence alone has given the positive proof necessary for the establishment of a standard of judgment.

<sup>3</sup>H. W. Foote, *Robert Feke*, 1930, viii.

In his memorandum books, preserved in the Essex Institute, Salem, Timothy Orne noted payments in 1756 to one "Joseph Badgor of Boston Limbner" in return for which he received pictures of himself and his wife. Additional payments were recorded in 1757 to "Joseph Baggor of Boston Faicepainter" who earned them, not only by supplying a "Painted Highlander" and a "Painted Laughing Boy," valued at fifteen shillings each, but, according to an entry of November 4, "By Draw<sup>g</sup> Pictures of my 4 Children 5.5." Luckily the portraits of Mr. and Mrs. Orne and those of



two of their children have survived, still in family possession and, published in the monumental *Pickering Genealogy*<sup>4</sup> in 1897, together with a quotation of the 1757 entry, they provided a standard by which the work of Badger could be positively recognized. Thus a number of traditional attributions to this appealing native American artist were confirmed, and Lawrence Park, whose pioneering studies did much to build a sound foundation for early American art history, was enabled, in a monograph<sup>5</sup> of 1918, to claim more than sixty additional canvases as the work of Badger. In so doing he not only revived the memory of an almost forgotten portrait painter but helped define the work of John Smibert and John Singleton Copley, since many of the portraits had been wrongly attributed to one or the other of these artists. Mr. Park stated he had never seen a signed portrait by Badger and that the only known record of payment besides those for the Orne portraits concerned pictures which have since disappeared. The Orne memoranda thus formed an essential basis for his discriminating judgment.

<sup>4</sup>H. Ellery and C. P. Bowditch, *The Pickering Genealogy*, 1897, I, 95, 97, 186-187, opp. 189, 190.

<sup>5</sup>L. Park, *Joseph Badger*, 1918.

The student of American painting before 1800 has the advantage that the pictures he is studying are almost always portraits. Therefore, if the identity of the subject is not entirely lost, his best line of approach is to search for evidence among the documents, published and unpublished, which are associated with the sitter and his family.

First of all it is well to consult the published material. Good family genealogies, of which *The Pickering Genealogy*, referred to above, is a particularly fine example, are useful not only in tracing the possible line of descent of the portrait but because it may be illustrated or mentioned in them with a record of former ownership and a traditional attribution. Helpful quotations from wills and inventories and from family manuscripts often appear.

The published church records and vital records of the community in which the sitter lived may reveal links in the family line, or by recording the births and baptisms of infants, establish where the family was probably living at a certain period. Such evidence is occasionally incorporated in town histories and in the proceedings and collections of genealogical and historical societies. It is also of use in attempting to follow the peregrinations of our itinerant artists. For example, according to the history of Princeton, Massachusetts,<sup>6</sup> and other sources, the dates and places of birth of Edward Savage's eight children were as follows: 1795, Boston; 1796, Philadelphia; 1798, Burlington, N. J.; 1800, Philadelphia; 1802, New York; 1805, 1807, and 1810, Princeton. Town and city directories also aid in placing artists in given communities, and published excerpts from Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Maryland and South Carolina newspapers are invaluable for this purpose.<sup>7</sup> Savage, we find, advertised in Philadelphia newspapers in 1796, 1799 and 1800. Other communities had their newspapers, and if one suspects the approximate date of an artist's visit, inspection of the newspaper files may yield an advertisement or other notice.

Published diaries occasionally contain entries of value. Mary Vial Holyoke, wife of Dr. Edward Augustus Holyoke of Salem, wrote on March 12, 1771, "Doctor Sat for his Picture," and on the 27th of the same month, "First sat for my picture."<sup>8</sup> Since she did not trouble to add the name of

<sup>6</sup>F. E. Blake, *History of the Town of Princeton*, 1915, II, 260-261; C. H. Hart, *Edward Savage, Painter and Engraver, and His Unfinished Copperplate of "The Congress Voting Independence,"* 1905.

<sup>7</sup>G. F. Dow, *The Arts & Crafts in New England, 1704-1775*, 1927; New-York Historical Society, *The Arts and Crafts in New York, 1726-1776*, 1938; A. C. Prime, *The Arts and Crafts in Philadelphia, Maryland, and South Carolina, 1721-1785*, 1929, and *Series Two, 1786-1800*, 1932.

<sup>8</sup>G. F. Dow, ed., *The Holyoke Diaries, 1709-1856*, 1911, opp. 31, 75-77.





FIG. 1. BENJAMIN BLYTH: MARY VIAL HOLYOKE  
*Estate of Andrew Nichols, Halthorne, Massachusetts*



FIG. 2. BENJAMIN BLYTH: GEORGE CABOT  
*Henry Lee Shattuck, Boston*



the artist it has been left to stylistic judgment in modern times to confirm the strong traditional attribution to Benjamin Blyth of two small pastels still owned by descendants. Lent by their different owners to an exhibition for study side by side, they were seen to be obviously by the same hand and that of Mrs. Holyoke (Fig. 1) was then taken for direct comparison with the pastel of George Cabot (Fig. 2) which may be considered a standard portrait in determining the work of Benjamin Blyth. It came by inheritance to the present owner, and though traditionally believed to be by Copley, is undeniably though faintly signed in yellow crayon at the right of the head "B Blyth pinx 1771."<sup>9</sup>

Another, and much more important, Salem diarist was Rev. William Bentley who had an enthusiasm for ancient portraits unsurpassed even at the present day, noting their appearance and location and expressing doubts concerning certain identifications which still remain in question. There is a familiar ring about his entry of 1804 about a still problematical portrait said to represent Governor Bradstreet: "I should be glad to get its history as it has many marks of a copy in modern times."<sup>10</sup> Particularly helpful are the diaries<sup>11</sup> of the man who can lay claim to being the American artist's most distinguished sitter, George Washington, who meticulously noted sittings for C. W. Peale, Pine, Ramage, Savage, Trumbull and a number of others.

Published collections of letters sometimes offer the student much material. Washington bothered to write down his reactions to the ordeal of posing: "grave," "sullen," and "under the influence of Morpheus" in 1772; sitting "like patience on a Monument" in 1785; and, by 1792, "heartily tired of the attendance which, from one cause or another" he had "bestowed on these kind of people."<sup>12</sup> It is especially fortunate that many letters written to and by John Singleton Copley were discovered, with other family correspondence, in the Public Record Office, London. These have been published<sup>13</sup> and give a great deal of information about sitters, methods of work and the eighteenth-century attitudes of artists and their patrons.

Turning now to manuscript sources, the probate records preserved at county courthouses should be consulted first of all, for possible informa-

<sup>9</sup>The word "pinx" is practically rubbed out and imagination had to be used in distinguishing it and in making out a repetition of this inscription at the left, above the sitter's right shoulder.

<sup>10</sup>The Essex Institute, *The Diary of William Bentley, D.D.*, 1911, III, 89.

<sup>11</sup>J. C. Fitzpatrick, ed., *The Diaries of George Washington*, 1925, 4 vols.

<sup>12</sup>J. C. Fitzpatrick, ed., *The Writings of George Washington*, 1931-1944, III, 83-84; XXVIII, 140; XXXII, 83.

<sup>13</sup>*Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 1914, LXXI.

tion in the wills, inventories and other papers pertaining to the estates of the sitter, his widow, his children and members of the family through whom a portrait is believed to have descended. Almost always, however, this indispensable search is unrewarding, which is surprising when one considers the detailed nature of the inventories. It may be that then, as now, family portraits were considered, in the well-known phrase of the appraiser, "of sentimental value only." But paintings of all sorts were doubtless underrated, for as late as 1817, when, at the death of Edward Savage, the contents of his museum in Boston were inventoried, separate note was made of such natural history objects as "2 Kings of the Vultures" and "1 Ostrich, damaged," while except for his group of the Washington family and two other pictures, the rest are entered tantalizingly as "Lot including all the other paintings about 70 in number," and this in spite of the fact that three artists took the inventory. On occasion, however, the discoveries are most gratifying. Timothy Orne's inventory obligingly lists "7. Family Pictures £22..16/." of which four are doubtless the still extant canvases by Badger. Seldom is an artist mentioned, but an important exception is found in the will of Andrew Oliver who died in 1774 bequeathing to his sons four family pictures "done by Smibert." As these survive they form additional canvases of value in defining what actually constitutes the style of an artist to whom more portraits have probably been wrongly assigned than to any other colonial painter except Copley. Indices of the more important probate records may be consulted in historical libraries to ascertain where the papers concerning an estate are to be found.

Manuscript collections of the letters, bills, diaries, and account books of the sitter's family may reward patient search. The nucleus of the Worcester Art Museum's early American collection is a group of the ancestral portraits of its founder, Stephen Salisbury, III. Luckily the Salisburys were a devoted family and their detailed correspondence, in which the portraits are occasionally mentioned, is preserved at the American Antiquarian Society.<sup>14</sup> One can, for example, time and trace the development of a portrait by Gilbert Stuart of Mrs. Stephen Salisbury, I. The references begin just before her first sitting with a note from her husband, June 16, 1810: ". . . Hope you will not fail calling on Stewart this morning should the Portrait he takes be not halve so handsome and pleasant as the original, I certainly shall not like it," and continue until, after months of delay caused by the dilatory, unbusinesslike ways of the artist, Mr. Salis-

<sup>14</sup>H. M. Forbes, "Some Salisbury Family Portraits," *Old Time New England*, 1930, XXI, 3-18, 74-84.

bury's nephew could write, May 30, 1811: "Stewart has at last completed your portraits, if any reliance can be placed upon his word." The Salisburys had comparatively little reason to complain, however, since extracts from Thomas Jefferson's correspondence, published in Fiske Kimball's fine study of the life portraits of the third president,<sup>15</sup> indicate that it took polite pressure over a period of about sixteen years to extract from the conscienceless Stuart a likeness he had painted about 1805. Incidentally this monograph is an excellent example of the proper use of rich documentary material in carrying out an investigation which should be of as great interest to the student of American history as to the art historian.

The records of the present or recent owners of a picture, whether a private individual, a dealer's gallery or an institution, should be consulted. John Hill Morgan relates how "a chance conversation on the beach at York Harbor, Maine, disclosed the fact that a paid bill for one of Blackburn's portraits [Mrs. Nathaniel Barrell], signed 'Jos. Blackburn' and dated Portsmouth, N. H., July 12, 1762," was in the possession of the owner of the portrait.<sup>16</sup> This was an exciting discovery for it definitely proved that the artist who signed himself "I. Blackburn" on many mid-eighteenth-century portraits was not named Jonathan B. Blackburn, as had mistakenly been assumed. This error, of which Mr. Morgan traces the origin in some guesses hazarded over sixty years ago, vividly illustrates the danger of putting into print inadequately substantiated theories, for no matter how much the original writer hedges around his remarks with "possibly" and "probably" they run the risk of being repeated as positive facts later on — and nothing is more persistent than a plausible, useful error, particularly when hurried curators are preparing exhibition catalogues!

Under the heading of documentary evidence may also come labels attached to the backs of the pictures themselves. These should be treated with caution. Even when demonstrably very old they are likely not to be contemporary with the painting and often represent the tradition believed in by a younger generation of owners. One must face the fact also that there are sometimes deliberately false labels, so if the picture concerned is in any way under suspicion, particular care should be exercised. Labels often indicate former ownership of a picture and exhibitions in which it has been shown.

<sup>15</sup>F. Kimball, *The Life Portraits of Jefferson and Their Replicas*, 1944, 512-516.

<sup>16</sup>J. H. Morgan and H. W. Foote, *An Extension of Lawrence Park's Descriptive List of the Work of Joseph Blackburn*, 1937, 6.

Inscriptions and the artist's signature on the painting itself are most vital bits of evidence but students should be aware that, in a number of cases, these have been faked and so, if a picture's history is at all uncertain, they should be especially alert to such a possibility. The Yale Gallery of Fine Arts owns as an example for the instruction of students a portrait by an unknown eighteenth-century artist. It bears an unauthentic Smibert signature and, on a document near the sitter's right hand (Fig. 3) the inscription "Tho<sup>s</sup>. Fitch Esq<sup>r</sup>. Norwalk" which has been shown by scientific examination to be a later addition. Reliance on such documentary evidence to identify the subject as Thomas Fitch, a Chief Justice and Governor of Connecticut, and the portrait as a genuine example of Smibert's style would then be most unsound. Some seventeenth-century portraits bear a most valuable clue to the identification of the sitter, for his age and the date of the portrait have been added by the artist. For example, the inscription "AE:2 A<sup>c</sup> 1670" on a charming child's portrait owned by the Adams Memorial Society, Quincy, aids in refuting strong tradition that John Quincy, born in 1689, is represented, and supports stylistic judgment and scientific examination in attributing the canvas to the artist who painted a group portrait of *The Mason Children* in 1670, while at the same time identifying the subject as their two-year-old sister, Alice Mason.<sup>17</sup>

Appropriate documents are often painted in the hands of sitters and can be revealing. One wonders how many persons took the same pains as Major John Small who, when ordering from Copley a copy of a portrait of himself, asked that he be depicted holding "a paper, or part of a paper folded up and endors'd on the upper end with the Annex'd Superscription or Endorsement," which read, "General Return of the troops composing the Army in North America Boston 8ber 1769. N.B. The words may be contracted if you choose it, the paper by no means to be broader than this annex'd pattern."<sup>18</sup> Major Small was bound he was going to have his documentary evidence correct and it's a pity his portrait is not known to exist today. If there were need of supporting a strong traditional identification the papers (Fig. 4) shown in the portrait of Theodore Atkinson of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, by Blackburn<sup>19</sup> would be a good example of how helpful such evidence can be. One bearing the inscription "Enlistm<sup>ts</sup> returnd for 1760" and another labeled "Expences

<sup>17</sup>L. Dresser, *Seventeenth Century Painting in New England*, 1935, 100-103.

<sup>18</sup>*Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 1914, LXXI, 78.

<sup>19</sup>L. Park, *Joseph Blackburn*, 1923, opp. 16.



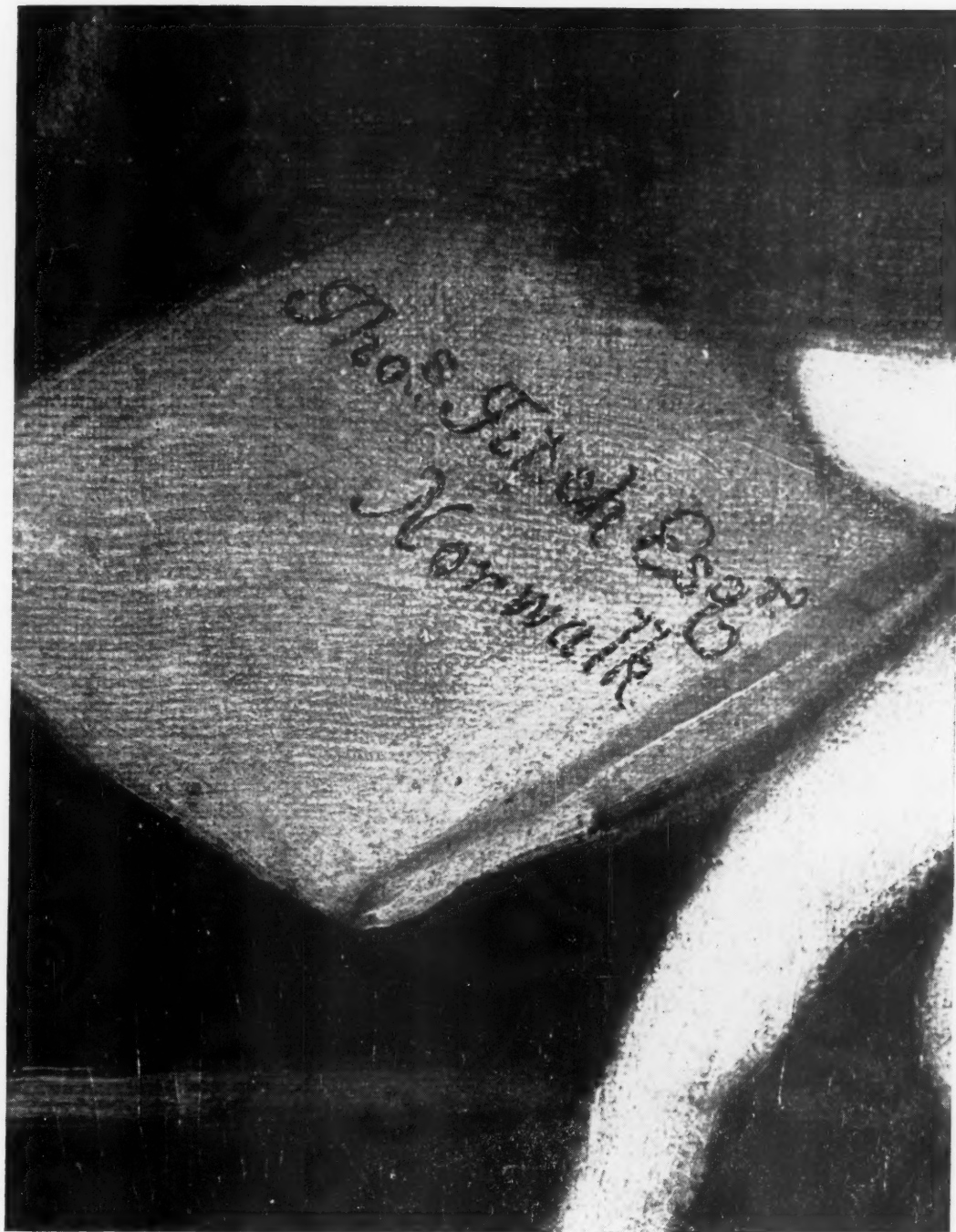


FIG. 3. DETAIL SHOWING A FALSIFIED INSCRIPTION ON AN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY PORTRAIT  
*Yale Gallery of Fine Arts, New Haven*





FIG. 4. (above) DETAIL FROM THE PORTRAIT OF THEODORE ATKINSON  
BY JOSEPH BLACKBURN  
*Worcester Art Museum*



FIG. 5. DETAIL FROM A PORTRAIT OF AN UNIDENTIFIED GENTLEMAN BY AN  
UNKNOWN ARTIST  
*New-York Historical Society*

of Government" are suitable for a man who had served during the French and Indian Wars as Colonel of the 1st New Hampshire Regiment and who was Secretary of the Province from 1741 to 1762, but for good measure a folded letter at the extreme left, half cut off by the picture edge, is addressed to "... Atkinson Esqr" "... mouth."

Allied to documentary evidence is the information which may be gleaned from painted accessories and background details. William Sawitzky has drawn interesting conclusions from examples of wild-life appearing in portraits. Thus he believes that a likeness of an unidentified gentleman owned by the New-York Historical Society<sup>20</sup> is a copy after a French original rather than an early American portrait, and he finds supporting evidence in the dead game bird held in the sitter's hand which he identifies as "a Red-legged Partridge (*Alectoris rufa*), a native of south European ranges, specifically the Pyrenees" (Fig. 5). In the work of some artists landscape details can be of aid in dating a picture. The inscription on the large landscape by Ralph Earl known as *Looking East from Leicester Hills*<sup>21</sup> gives the date 1800 but in such a script that it is doubted if the hand of the artist was responsible. Some have assumed that it was added after his death and is an error. The suggestion was once made that the picture was painted as early as the 1770's, but there is ample evidence within the painting itself that such was not the case. The view shows early Worcester in the distance with two distinctive church spires rising above the trees (Fig. 6). One is that of the Old South Church, built in 1763, but the other, that of the Second Parish Church, was not erected until after March 1789 when the plans for it were adopted. The building was dedicated in January 1792. A comparison with representations of these spires (Figs. 7 and 8)<sup>22</sup> indicates that Earl was making a definite attempt to paint, as accurately as possible, the view from his patron's house.

Too much faith, however, should not be placed in the desire of either patron or artist for accuracy. John Smibert wrote to England in 1744 ordering "a set of ships published by Lempriere and sold by H. Toms in Union Court Holborn" and adding: "These ships I want sometimes for to be in a distant view in Portraits of Merchts etc who chuse such, so if there be any better done since send them. but they must be in the modern construction."<sup>23</sup> Therefore we cannot suppose that the ships shown in

<sup>20</sup>New-York Historical Society, *Catalogue of American Portraits*, 1941, 356.

<sup>21</sup>A more exact title for this picture is *Looking East from Denny Hill*.

<sup>22</sup>*The First Church, Old South, of Worcester, Massachusetts, Bi-Centennial Celebration*, 1916, 4, 18, 19; A. Hill, *The Pastor's Record; A Sermon Preached March 28, 1867 before the Second Congregational Society in Worcester*, 1867, opp. 26.

<sup>23</sup>*Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, October, 1915, 30-31.



FIG. 6. RALPH EARL: *LOOKING EAST FROM LEICESTER HILLS* (detail)  
*Worcester Art Museum*

portraits by Smibert are necessarily accurate representations of vessels owned by the sitter.

Costume can help in dating a picture and thus aid in justifying or disproving an attribution or identification. It is obviously impossible for an artist to have painted a portrait in which the sitter is costumed in a manner which flourished some time after that artist's death, nor, unless the portrait is posthumous or idealized, is a sitter likely to be painted wearing clothing which came into style after he had died. On the other hand costume details which seem a little early need not cause as much concern. There is evidence that Copley himself occasionally, and apparently to the complete satisfaction of his sitters, copied costumes from English prints. At other times, however, he was meticulously accurate. In 1768 Myles Cooper, President of King's College, sent him from New York "a Gown,

Hood, and Band, by which to finish the Drapery" of a portrait for which Cooper had already sat in Boston. Copley, with the usual dilatoriness of his profession, retained the articles longer than was convenient for the owner, who wrote in January 1769, "But the Gown I think you are unpardonable for keeping in your Hands so long," and begged Cop'ey to send it "by the first Opportunity."<sup>24</sup> In the portrait now owned by Columbia University (Fig. 9) the pink and scarlet gown supports the identification of the sitter who received the D.C.L. degree from Oxford University in 1767.<sup>25</sup>

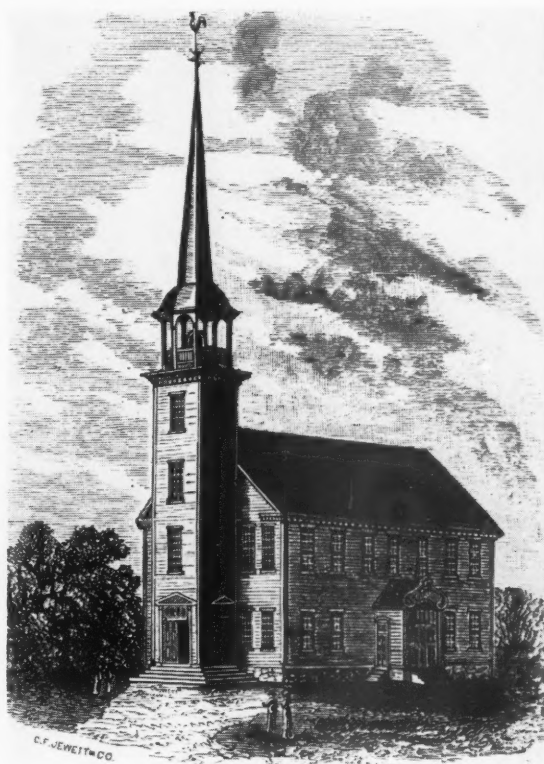
It has been possible to suggest only a few of the paths of investigation open to the student of early American painting. For those who may be interested it is a rewarding field with the raw materials for research readily at hand, and is worthy of one's best efforts, for much depends on the integrity and sound scholarship of those who write about early American paintings or have them in their care. Deliberate harm has been done in the recent past by the "discovery" and sale to institutions and the

<sup>24</sup>*Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, LXXI, 71, 74.

<sup>25</sup>C. H. Vance, "Myles Cooper," *Columbia University Quarterly*, September, 1930, XXII, no. 3, 262; B. N. Parker and A. B. Wheeler, *John Singleton Copley, American Portraits*, 1938, 60, pl. 88.

FIG. 7. (below) SECOND PARISH CHURCH, WORCESTER, MASS.

FIG. 8. OLD SOUTH CHURCH, WORCESTER, MASS.





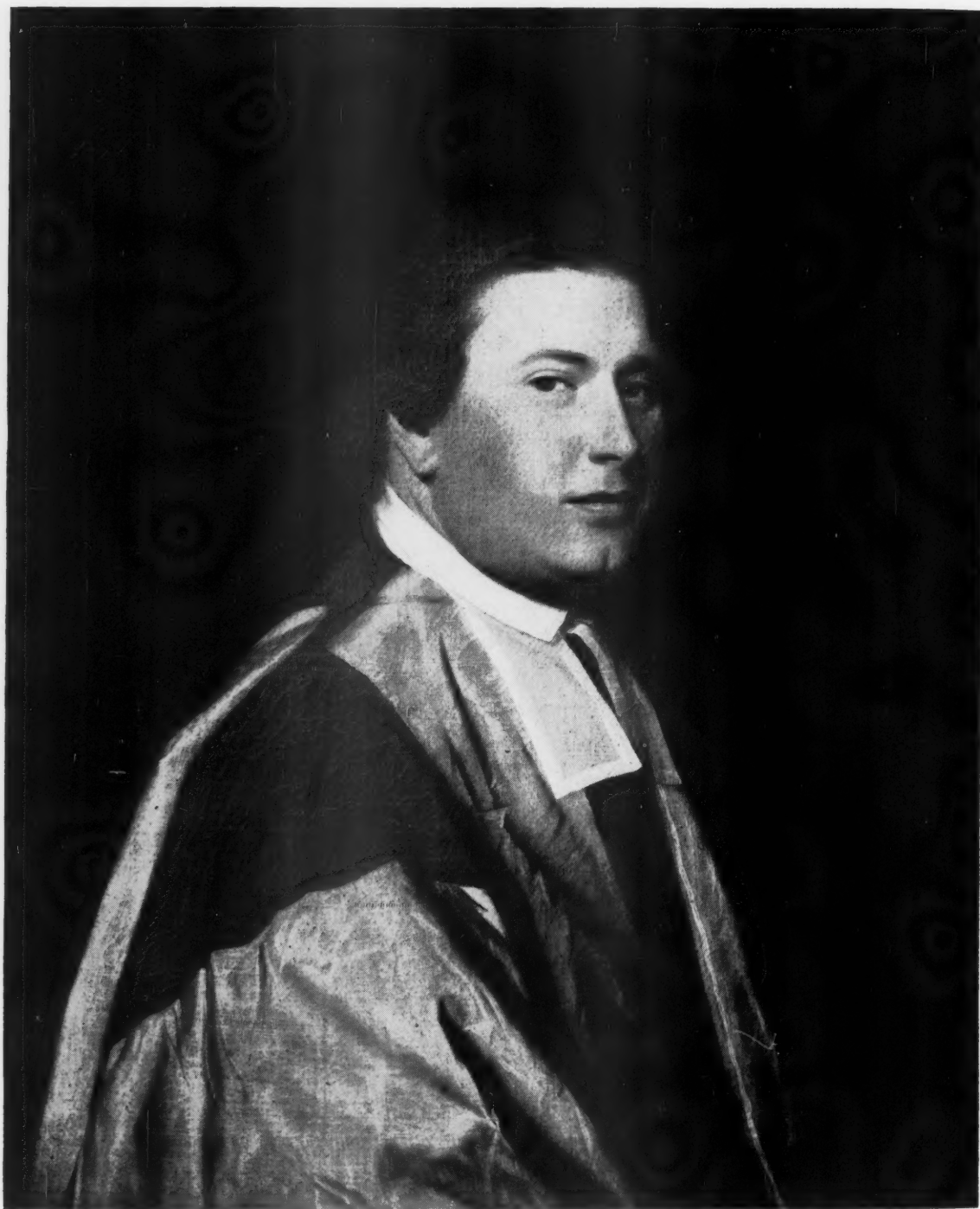


FIG. 9. JOHN SINGLETON COPLEY: MYLES COOPER  
*Columbia University, New York*



descendants of the purported sitters, of portraits with faked signatures and imaginary pedigrees. The existence of such portraits should be understood by all so that theories, necessarily erroneous, will not be based on them and they will not be used as standards of comparison in making attributions. Harm has also been done, though utterly unintentionally, by the publication as fact, without further explanation, of attributions based solely on modern stylistic judgment. The writer may change his opinion but the printed word remains to the confusion of future students. It would be helpful if the convention could be established among art historians and museum curators that it always should be made clear in caption and label when an attribution is based solely on contemporary critical judgment.

Another matter of even greater importance is the preservation of the continuity of a picture's legitimate history, and responsibility for this lies not only on private owners and museum curators but particularly on the dealers through whose hands portraits are apt to pass after they leave the possession of descendants. Understandable as it may be from a practical point of view, the custom of not revealing sufficient information concerning the last owner to enable the buyer to complete a study of the picture's history through correspondence or direct conversation, has done harm, now irreparable in many important cases. Pedigrees without any reference to the documentary or other evidence on which the statements of fact therein were presumably based, are meaningless. If, as a picture passes from hand to hand, its full history could go along with it so that valuable links with its past are not lost, a tremendous service would be done for art scholarship. Of course fine portraits will often appear in the art market, already long since shorn of their identities, in which case all that can be done is to state the fact, tracing the immediate history as far back as possible. Only if conscientious portrait owners, dealers, museum curators and art historians work together, pooling their knowledge, and setting simple truth as their objective, can a firm foundation for the history of early American painting be assured.

## SCIENTIFIC AID IN ATTRIBUTION

By ALAN BURROUGHS

IN THE field of early American art, all will agree, traditions are vague, documents are as scarce as signatures, and stylistic traits tend to the impersonal. Because the sources of artistry and the opportunities for training were few, our early painters appear — with few exceptions — to have been run from one mould. Even among the exceptions, like Feke and Greenwood, or Copley and Nathaniel Smibert, there are occasions when personalities seem to be blended on one canvas, to the confusion of critics. Under these circumstances it is scarcely necessary to point out the importance of any additional aids to the study and classification of paintings, which will supplement historical information and enable the critic to examine more closely the structure of pictures.

It is evident that criticism derived from study of the surface of a painting is unreliable when the surface has either been altered from its original state or was meant to imitate the surface of another picture. Deteriorated varnish or pigment, repaints, revisions in form, or changes in subject, all complicate stylistic criticism, as do the circumstances that a picture may be a deliberate copy or a more or less unconscious adaptation of another style. For example: delicate modelling appears flat under a coat of dirt; shadows darken or fade, depending on the materials used; small repairs have to be extended over large areas, or the whole covered by a general tone, in order to blend the old with the new; old repainting, as distinct from repairing, may bring a costume "up to date" or "improve a likeness"; revisions made by the artist in the course of achieving a design may result in an unusual texture; and of course influences from other artists, due to admiration for a "new" style or the need for a method, most probably will affect the surface appearance as a whole.

The so-called scientific aids available to the critic have been thoroughly described (see the references in the summary by Sheldon Keck in the *Brooklyn Museum Journal* for 1942). They are not of equal value in all circumstances. Photography by infra-red and ultra-violet rays helps to reveal surface conditions by penetrating dark varnish and differentiating between pigments and mediums of different fluorescence. Chemical analysis shows the difference between pigments, the composition of which has changed since the eighteenth century. The microscope and macrophotography enlarge small areas of pigment so as to clarify the surface structure

and even reveal layers of pigment in cross section. X-ray shadowgraphs record the total accumulation of dense material in a painting, thus making visible (under favorable conditions) alterations and something of the "inner" structure.

Any or all of these aids may serve the critic well, especially in discounting adverse surface conditions. Yet none of them necessarily leads to an attribution or even to a decision about date, stylistic influence, or internal physical state. Sheldon Keck, in the article mentioned above, has illustrated (his Figs. VII and IX) the confusion resulting from the imposition of one layer of pigment on another of equal density. No scientific test could have disclosed the stylistic gap between the surface portrait and the hidden one which was subsequently uncovered by cleaning. Although the x-rays did reveal the fact that something lay beneath the surface, they failed to reveal the character of the first coat of pigment. Also, it must be pointed out, they would fail to record the important details if the picture had been heavily relined or painted on the back with a protective coating of dense material, or if the original surface had been rubbed down to a thin film. Physical conditions frequently limit the effectiveness of x-ray shadowgraphs.

There is another limitation of a more general nature. Although the structure and emphasis of brushwork can be reproduced in the form of a concrete image, the interpretation of the scientific evidence often remains a problem, especially for the non-specialist. Whatever science discloses about a method of painting may be a matter of fact, but the meaning in terms of artistry is essentially a matter of speculation, even if the evidence is clear. The physical demonstration of the condition of the pigment has to be reconciled with what the critic knows about tastes and art history.

It is possible to show, for instance, that Copley painted in several different manners — that is, the pigmentation differs in pictures which can be thoroughly documented and which bear reliable signatures and dates. Similarly it can be shown that Nathaniel Smibert painted in another manner, or manners. But these demonstrations of artistic method do not prove that a certain unsigned, undocumented picture which recalls the styles of both artists is certainly by either Copley or Nathaniel Smibert. To one critic it may appear that the debated picture was painted by neither; to another — the present writer for instance — the lightness of touch, characteristic of Copley at one period of his career, may be suggested with the explanation that the superficial resemblance to the work of Nathaniel Smibert is due to extraneous conditions — that the work was left unfinished



FIG. 1. PETER PELHAM: COTTON MATHER (detail)



FIG. 2. COPY OF PELHAM'S PORTRAIT (detail)



FIG. 3. SHADOWGRAPH DETAIL OF PELHAM'S PORTRAIT



FIG. 4. SHADOWGRAPH DETAIL OF THE COPY

*Courtesy of The American Antiquarian Society, Worcester*



and was completed by a later artist who happened to use the tight modelling which recalls Smibert's. This obviously is speculation.

However, these limitations should not be overemphasized. The advantages of special aids are certain. Consider the part played by x-rays alone. Here are two paintings of the same subject, one of which must have been copied from the other (Figs. 1 and 2); and also a repainted, signed portrait and an unsigned one (Figs. 5 and 6), which have lately been attributed to the same artist.

The first pair, identified by an engraving in mezzotint which is signed "P. Pelham Pinxit et Fecit," are identical in design, though different in handling. The best preserved version (Fig. 2) appears on the surface to be stronger in form and perhaps in character, as many have thought. The other has been somewhat abraded and seems to have been modelled in a softer manner. But one glance at the x-ray shadowgraphs is enough to show the specialist which is the copy, in spite of differences in physical condition. The flat, outlined preparation for the face and the brief, emphatic highlights in Fig. 4 proclaim copyist's method as surely as the delicate modelling in Fig. 3 indicates an original — if vague — search for rounded forms. The fact that Fig. 3 appears less definite than Fig. 4 has two probable explanations; because of surface abrasions the amount of pigment has been reduced, and because of Pelham's method<sup>1</sup> there was little density to the pigment originally. Pelham, it may be assumed, made some kind of a drawing or sketch in light and shade and then glazed the flesh tone with blended highlights up to the shadows which, though painted in pigment of little density, are surrounded by denser pigment. Thus Fig. 3, thin as it is, nevertheless reveals the shapes of the eyes, nostril and mouth and also some of the gradation of light and shade on the right-hand side of the face. The copyist, it will be noted, had only to follow the surface effect as it appeared originally; he needed a general flesh tone, which he applied neatly all over the area of the face without gradations of tone, and then he added highlights and shadows, the latter being invisible in the shadowgraph. The meaning of the evidence in this case seems clear.

It should also be clear in the case of Figs. 7 and 8 which demonstrate the brushwork in two portraits, the first of which — partly repainted — is signed "J. Greenwood pinx 1749." That the other is also by Greenwood, though unsigned and traditionally attributed to an unknown painter, is confirmed by the identity in artistic character. A useful device for appre-

<sup>1</sup>A modified glazing technique, as can be studied in the well-preserved portrait of Mather Byles, also in the American Antiquarian Society.





FIG. 5. JOHN GREENWOOD: MARY (WHIPPLE EPES) HOLYOKE  
*Dr. John Holyoke Nichols, Hathorne, Massachusetts*



FIG. 6. JOHN GREENWOOD: MARY (FITCH) CABOT  
*Estate of A. Lawrence Lowell, Boston*



FIG. 7. SHADOWGRAPH DETAIL OF MARY HOLYOKE



FIG. 8. SHADOWGRAPH DETAIL OF MARY CABOT

ciating the value of the shadowgraph evidence is to imagine holding a brush and painting both portraits. If the strokes are followed with accuracy and imagination, the "feeling" of the brush may be acquired — that is, how it was held and how rapidly it moved and why it moved this way or that. Comparing the two sets of strokes, one recognizes the general similarity between cheeks, noses, ears, necks and breasts, while at the same time noting a degree more tightness in Fig. 8, identifiable in the strong oval line about the face, the massive eyelids, the heavy down strokes in the neck and the sharpness of the brushwork generally. This amounts to a physical demonstration of a difference in emphasis within a similarity of method, which must be interpreted as meaning that Greenwood painted both portraits, although possibly at different stages of his career.

Speculation on the difference in emphasis, which appears on the surfaces of the portraits as well as in the shadowgraphs, does not lead very far. The question, why the surface of the signed portrait (Fig. 5) seems sharper in line than the other, whereas its shadowgraph (Fig. 7) is less so than the other shadowgraph, is answered by the observation that there are holes in the cheek and neck which have been covered over, the repaint having been extended generally over the face. But an explanation for the difference in emphasis in the shadowgraphs (a difference in date?) is problematic. It is true that the earliest dated portraits, signed by Greenwood in 1747, are stiff in handling<sup>2</sup> as compared with some later portraits and are very close to what we observe in Fig. 8. It is also true that the young lady here portrayed was married in 1745, a probable occasion for having her likeness taken. But the complication is that the several portraits dated by Greenwood in 1749 and 1750 also differ in emphasis among themselves; they prove that degrees of stiffness of handling are unreliable as guides to dating his pictures.

Here then are two sets of shadowgraphs which illustrate the use of one of the "scientific" aids to the attribution of pictures. Many other examples could have been chosen, although not many would show so well the process of reaching a definite conclusion. Some solutions depend on numerous comparisons and exhaustive study, while more would be confusing because of their subtlety. That is the reason for stressing the limitations on the interpretation of shadowgraphs and for cautioning the reader that the evidence presented above was deliberately selected to make plain the two main types of critical problem — the differentiation between original and copy, and the identification of workmanship.

<sup>2</sup>See *John Greenwood in America*, Addison Gallery of American Art, 1943.

## SOME PROBLEMS IN THE ORIGINS OF THE AMERICAN PORTRAIT

By BARBARA N. PARKER

EVERY student of American portraiture is conscious that from its earliest beginnings in the seventeenth century it had a sober, unostentatious temper, which distinguished it from the work of contemporary painters in Europe. Many have felt that the lack of technical facility of the limners working in America during the first century of its painters' history served well to emphasize the plain and rugged character of the colonial men and women represented. Yet it appears to have been somewhat a matter of circumstance, which permitted American painting to develop as it did, for the wealthy colonists who had their portraits painted, took their fashions and luxuries from Europe, and would undoubtedly have welcomed a facile technician if he had sailed across the ocean in about the year 1700, just as they welcomed the English-trained Peter Pelham and John Smibert in the 1720's.<sup>1</sup> Apparently no such skilled painter came to this country in the seventeenth century, and our earliest portraits, dating from about 1670, are patterned not on European work of the same period, but on the Stuart painters of fifty years earlier, with whom the colonists were familiar when they first left England, perhaps taking family portraits with them. Thus the explanation of the straightforward, rugged type of portrait produced here cannot be found merely in the fresh air of the New World, but in early seventeenth-century England. Both the temper and the technique of our first portraits are linked with early Stuart painters such as Gilbert Jackson and Cornelius Johnson. Their work must be studied more closely before the American portraits of 1670 to 1730 can be properly fathomed.

Van Dyck arrived in England about the time that the first settlements were being made in New England. It is significant that the colonists missed any direct contact with the brilliant Van Dyck-Lely school of court painting which followed. But though they did not have firsthand acquaintance with Van Dyck, Lely or Kneller, advertisements in eighteenth-century Boston newspapers prove that prints of English portraits were sold in this country. Early American painters were not averse to borrowing poses, accessories and backgrounds from these prints. Several writers in the field

<sup>1</sup>These remarks have mainly to do with England and New England, but they may be applied throughout the colonies, except for the considerable group of seventeenth-century Dutch painters in New York.

of American painting have pointed out specific cases of such plagiarism, but none has yet made a thorough study or list of these foreign prints as a first step towards estimating their influence.

By the time such English-trained artists as John Smibert, Joseph Blackburn and John Wollaston came to this country to work, there had been produced a number of rather crude American portraits, but there was, of course, no school of painting on this side of the Atlantic. Nevertheless these portraits were enough alike in temper and technique to justify finding in them the roots of an American style, and this same type of straightforward, uncompromising likeness persisted here and there throughout the eighteenth century, seemingly without much further contact with outside influences. The question then arises: did Smibert, Blackburn and Wollaston change their style to adapt themselves to the new country? Study of their portraits painted on both sides of the Atlantic seems to prove that they changed very little, yet their work forms an integral part of early American painting. The explanation lies in the fact that they came from a group of English provincial painters, who form a real link between the brilliant eighteenth-century London painters on the one hand and colonial American painting on the other. The work of such men as Hogarth, Reynolds and Gainsborough so overshadowed these provincials in England, that comparatively little research has been done on them. Mr. Collins Baker gives a number of their names, before unrecorded, in his *British Painting* (1935). These English provincials showed the same sober, unostentatious temper as their colonial cousins, and while they may have been able to see the work of the court painters and receive grandiose ideas as to costume and accessories, they adapted them to their more limited technique.

Several interesting questions of costume come up in connection with the assigning of portraits to one side of the ocean or the other. Although the rigors of the New World may have prompted the adoption of a more simple and durable type of dress than in England, wherever possible the richer colonists appear to have copied the latest fashions from London and the Continent. Brocaded silk dresses were included in many wardrobes in this country, yet almost without exception colonial painters posed their sitters in dresses of solid color. Colonial gentlemen, according to their portraits, never wore ruffles of lace at their wrists, but rather a simple muslin ruffle or band, in contrast to the many lace ruffles in English portraits. These same differences occur, however, in England, depending on the social position and occupation of the sitter.

How close the provincial English painter was to his eighteenth-century





FIG. 1. WILLIAM DE NUNE: PORTRAIT OF A LADY  
*Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*



FIG. 2. ROBERT FEE: MRS. RALPH INMAN (SUSANNAH SPEAKMAN)  
*Mr. William Amory, Boston*



American contemporaries is illustrated by the two portraits here reproduced. The *Portrait of a Lady* (Fig. 1) was purchased at a Boston picture auction in 1870 by a descendant of Copley, as possibly by him. Only recently did cleaning reveal the signature "Will De Nune Pinx 1738." Inquiry of Mr. Collins Baker revealed that he had come across three other portraits by Will De Nune, all painted in England in the 1730's and '40's. *Mrs. Ralph Inman (Susannah Speakman)* (Fig. 2), though unsigned is generally accepted as by Robert Feke. The accidental likeness between the two ladies only emphasizes the similarity with which the two artists have handled their subjects. There is no evidence that De Nune came to America or that Feke visited England, yet their point of view and technique are not far apart, judging from these two portraits. The significance of this cannot be too much stressed, for it has been the habit among American scholars to call all portraits American which lack the technical virtuosity of the Continental or British court schools.

On the other hand, recent cullings from eighteenth-century American newspapers show that many more artists came to this country from abroad than had previously been supposed, "to follow the Business of Portrait Painting in its various branches." When some student in the field has the patience and skill to follow up these clues in the early newspapers, and perhaps find examples of their work, a number of new names may be added to the present list of well under fifty pre-nineteenth-century artists whose work in this country has already been identified.

John Singleton Copley represents the flowering of the colonial style, which was rooted in the work of the early Stuart painters and influenced by knowledge of eighteenth-century prints, without firsthand training in the technical formulas of the European schools of painting. Coupled with his natural genius, it was a happy combination of circumstances. No provincial English painter would have had the same good fortune, for given the same ability, he would have gravitated to more sophisticated circles, and his technique would have undergone a vast change, which is just what happened to Copley when he finally reached London.

This article does not pretend to do more than raise certain questions about the origins of the American portrait, which call for further research. The suggestions are fourfold: a greater knowledge of the early Stuart painters, more firsthand experience with English provincial portraits, an investigation into the prints which came into this country in an effort to ascertain their influence on our painting, and an effort to trace the work of certain artists who advertised their wares in eighteenth-century newspapers.



THOMAS COLE: LANDSCAPE WITH TREE TRUNKS  
*Rhode Island School of Design, Providence*

## THE STUDY OF NINETEENTH-CENTURY ART

By LLOYD GOODRICH

THE kind of research I am going to discuss is not in the broad fields of art history — in the evolution of content and style, the growth of institutions, or the social and economic aspects of art. It is a narrower kind of research, but fundamental — the intensive study of the individual artist and his work. The primary source of all art activity is the artist, and the most important thing about the artist is his work. To discover and record it, and to separate the genuine from the spurious, are among the basic functions of research.

The essential principles of attribution and authentication in the nineteenth century are the same as in earlier centuries. In brief, they are: first, to secure all factual information on the artist and his work; second, to establish a corpus of works proved by this evidence to be authentic; third, to study the style and method revealed in these authentic works, using all necessary scientific aids; fourth, on the knowledge so gained, to base stylistic judgments of works not documented.

But while these principles hold good for all periods, conditions in the nineteenth century are entirely different from any preceding periods. In seventeenth- and eighteenth-century America, contemporary records were meagre. Museums, dealers, exhibitions, art books and magazines did not yet exist. On artists as important as Feke and Earl, little biographical information has survived. Portraiture was a semi-utilitarian art and its practitioners were to some extent craftsmen, who often retained the craftsman's anonymity. Sitters cared more about likeness than about the artist's identity. Many early portraits remained unsigned and with no firsthand record of their authorship. Originality of style was not particularly aimed at; there was a general similarity in all portraiture of a given time. So attribution in American art before 1800 is often as purely a matter of discriminating stylistic judgment as in the trecento.

But with the new century conditions began to change. The young republic's growing cultural consciousness gave a new importance to art and artists. The exclusive concern with face-painting yielded to broader subjects — landscape, genre, even a few abortive attempts at history and mythology. With Cole and the Hudson River School, romantic landscape became one of our chief trends. Landscape and genre were more personal expressions than portraiture, and involved greater individual variations of

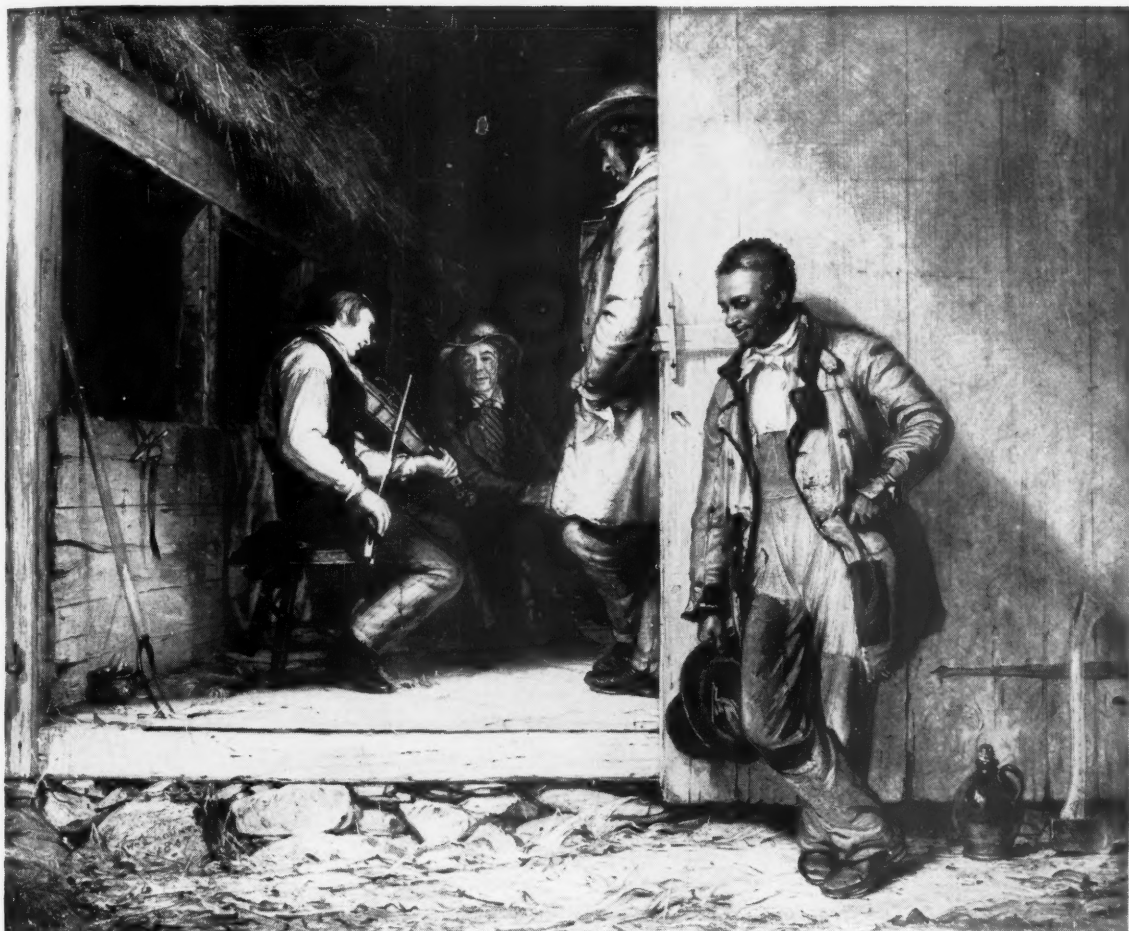
subject, viewpoint and style; there was more difference between Allston and Cole, Mount and Bingham, than between most colonial portraitists. Even in market values the artist's individuality became important; the fact that a picture was by Cole or Mount meant something that a portrait's being by Earl had not. Artists signed their pictures more, and records of authorship were more often preserved.

From the beginning of the century, the art world expanded steadily. Artists' societies like the Pennsylvania Academy and the National Academy were founded; a new phenomenon, the exhibition, was born; collectors appeared, a new class of patrons interested in art as something more than a means of perpetuating their own faces. The fast-growing press gave more space to art, and art criticism began. Writers like Dunlap and John Neal recorded information about native artists. The introduction of large-scale reproductive processes — lithography and wood-engraving — made it possible for magazines, giftbooks and annuals, and the big lithographic houses like Currier and Ives, to reproduce hundreds of pictures by American painters.

All these developments were accelerated in the second half of the century. The Centennial Exhibition of 1876 ushered in an era of artistic expansion such as no other modern nation had seen. Museums were launched, exhibitions multiplied, dealers appeared upon the scene, private collections of a new opulence were formed, auction sales of American art culminated in the Thomas B. Clarke sale of 1899, which proved that American art had a respectable market value. Art magazines appeared (and disappeared), while general magazines like the *Century* gave more space to art. Books devoted largely or wholly to American art were published year after year, most of them profusely illustrated picture books. About 1880 came the wide use of photography and photo-mechanical processes, the first really accurate methods of reproducing works of art. The earlier hand-drawn or hand-engraved illustration had been subject to human variableness, so that one is not always sure that it is of the original existing today; but photo-mechanical methods made reproductions scientifically accurate.

By the end of the century, an American art world had emerged which in essentials was that of today.

In terms of present-day research, all this created conditions such as can be found in no other historic period. Where the colonial scholar is delighted to find a firsthand document or an authentic signature, the nineteenth-century scholar is confronted with a vast mass of contemporary



WILLIAM S. MOUNT: THE POWER OF MUSIC  
*The Century Association, New York*



documentation, especially for the decades after the Civil War. Works of art were reproduced, described or mentioned in countless books, magazines, newspapers, and exhibition and auction catalogues. Critics of those leisurely days had a habit, fortunate for us today though less so for their readers, of minutely describing pictures, so that their reviews are mines of information. Tuckerman and other writers listed leading American collections, with artists and titles. Museums and academies kept records of works acquired or borrowed, often direct from the artist. Dealers' sales records sometimes go far back; in my research on Winslow Homer I had the great advantage of access to the records of his Boston dealers, Doll & Richards, back to the 1870's, and the more recent records of M. Knoedler & Company, both of which showed pictures received direct from the painter, and the purchasers' names.

The nearer we come to our own time, the closer our personal contacts with the artist. His family, friends or pupils will be living, his letters and manuscripts still extant; he may even have left a record of his work. In the case of Thomas Eakins I had the invaluable cooperation of his widow, herself a painter, who knew practically every picture he painted and had devotedly preserved everything relating to him.

This does not mean that all or even most of an artist's works will have contemporary documentation. Many of them were never exhibited, reproduced or even mentioned in print, and passed from artist to purchaser directly or in ways impossible to trace. Even with popular figures like Inness or Homer, constantly exhibited and illustrated in their lifetimes, a good proportion of their work remains without any contemporary data. But enough will have this kind of evidence to establish a relatively large corpus of unquestionable works, affording a basis for knowledge of style, technique and development by which undocumented works can be judged. In colonial painting the corpus would be much smaller; but in the nineteenth century, especially its last half, a proportion of authenticated works can be established such as would be impossible in earlier periods.

Research in the nineteenth century involves examination of an enormous amount of documentary material. It means searching all kinds of publications, securing museums' and dealers' records, consulting the artist's family and friends, collecting his letters and manuscripts. All this mass of information must be systematized and converted into data on individual works. Then the works must be located — often a considerable problem in itself. Portraits are apt to stay in the family, but the subject picture is an article of commerce and passes from owner to owner. As taste changes,

the art of whole generations such as the Hudson River School, or even the early work of famous figures like Inness, drops out of sight. Reconstructing the life work of an artist is a real piece of detection. Past owners must be traced to their present descendants; requests for information must be published; dealers, those invaluable sources of information, must be consulted; bits of fact from many sources must be pieced together like a picture puzzle. In the end, many works will elude discovery. Even in as thorough a piece of research as Bartlett Cowdrey's and Hermann Williams' recent book on Mount, many paintings fully described from contemporary sources had perforce to be listed as "present location unknown."

The picture once found, comes the task of examining and recording it. All details should be fully noted, even apparently irrelevant things such as exhibition labels and canvas-makers' marks, which can identify it or help to date it. Photographs should be secured, for no written notes or sketches can take the place of a photograph, not only for positive identification but for study of style, technique and condition. All workers in this field should learn to use the camera, not only to save expense but to record pictures in out-of-the-way places.

Real knowledge of an artist involves seeing and studying all his works that can be seen, until his style becomes as familiar as the handwriting of a friend. One must know his subjects, viewpoint, style, technique; and one must know these things not only as they were in a single period, but as they changed throughout his life. The Inness of 1849 was a different artist from the Inness of 1889, the Homer of 1863 from the Homer of 1883 and 1903. Recording an artist's work and writing his biography are inseparable parts of a single process. Apart from his work, his life will be little more than a collection of anecdotes; and without a knowledge of his development, the record of his work will be merely a list of pictures.

The scholar must have an infinite capacity for taking pains, but also less prosaic qualities. Stylistic judgment depends not only on knowledge, but on talents essential to the good critic — sensibility, discrimination, balanced judgment, and above all, an eye. This eye for style must be innate, like the artist's creative gift. There is no substitute for this, any more than for thorough knowledge acquired through the years.

## II

Problems of authenticity and attribution in nineteenth-century art are more clear-cut than in earlier periods. There are few important works about



WINSLOW HOMER: HUNTSMAN AND DOGS  
*Philadelphia Museum of Art*



THOMAS EAKINS: THE SWIMMING HOLE  
*Fort Worth Museum of Art, Fort Worth, Texas*

which there is any real question as to authorship, except in the field of folk art. Occasionally an unattributed picture of outstanding quality may turn up, but fuller research will usually reveal its author, perhaps as a newly discovered talent. But the period does present certain problems peculiar to itself.

One of these is the published print and its relation to paintings of the same subject. The print is often an aid to establishing the painter's identity or the picture's date, but too many easy assumptions should not be based on it. Popular prints were often widely copied; subjects like Alexander Robertson's *Mount Vernon* or Durand's *Capture of Major André* gave birth to scores of versions by painters of all degrees of skill or lack of it. The natural impulse to ascribe the copy to the original designer has led to much confusion. Take the engravings of American scenery after the Englishman William H. Bartlett published in the 1830's and '40's. Bartlett's own originals were wash drawings. But there is a whole series of oils of the same subjects, usually ascribed to him. Actually they seem to have been by a number of artists, especially the Frenchman Victor de Grailly, who specialized in such copies for the American trade. Similarly, the relation of the prints after Audubon to the paintings by or ascribed to him, and Robert Havell's part in the whole matter, will have to be clarified before we can say that we know Audubon as a painter. The whole problem of the relation of print and painting in the nineteenth century needs study by experts in both fields.

The extent of forgery in nineteenth-century American art is not generally realized. The growing popularity of the American school, the public's gullibility, the new-rich desire to buy famous names, the racketeering propensities of some dealers, and the lack of sound scholarship, have combined to produce a most unsavory situation. As soon as a prominent artist dies — sometimes before — the fakers get to work. Hardly a well-known figure is immune. Of Winslow Homer I have recorded close to four hundred fakes. Inness has been extensively forged. A group of spurious Homer Martins caused a lawsuit only a few years after his death. Even Whistler and Sargent, the most publicized Americans of their day, are not exempt. I have seen a collection that included over a hundred false Sargents among several hundred other dubious American pictures. Artists as recent as Bellows and Eilshemius are already being forged. The victims have been not just inexperienced buyers but leading collectors, dealers and museums.

Fakes fall into two main classes — deliberate forgeries and genuine works



of the period with false signatures and pedigrees. The latter are the more numerous. There have been hundreds of obscure artists for every well-known one. Only the well-known command any market. What could be easier than to take an obscure artist's picture that has a general resemblance to the style of some well-known man, add a signature, and concoct a pedigree? (The latter almost always states that the picture has been owned for years by someone who got it "direct from the artist.") Such fakes are fairly easily spotted by the expert. Most dubious Homers belong in this class, and a drearier group of tenth-rate pictures it would be hard to imagine. The painters are usually so mediocre that it is hopeless to try to identify them, but occasionally a good artist has been promoted; a number of W. A. Walkers, for example, are now masquerading as Homers. Sometimes one has the satisfaction of finding the real signature, overlooked by the faker; a small marine signed "Homer" was found on examination to be inscribed under the backing "Arthur Quartley" — a sea painter of the time and a good friend of Homer's. Or an old reproduction may give the real artist's name; in an exhibition catalogue of the 1880's I ran across an illustration of an Edward Moran which is now signed "Homer."

Deliberate forgeries are more complicated. Sometimes they are copies of well-known paintings, especially in museums where they can be easily studied. Any picture widely reproduced in color is apt to produce forgeries; witness the false Homers spawned by the Metropolitan Museum's often-reproduced group of his watercolors. Or the faker takes elements of various pictures and rearranges them, with fearsome results. Few of these attempts are particularly convincing. American fakers are a stupid lot, far below the standard of their European confreres — incompetent technically, and not clever enough to really study their original's style. Apparently they are unsuccessful artists, or rank amateurs, or fly-by-night dealers turned painters.

In certain extreme cases the forgeries of an artist outnumber his genuine works. Ryder and Blakelock are the outstanding examples. Ryder worked years over his pictures and his creative period was short, so that his total production was no more than a hundred and fifty. Yet at least a thousand so-called Ryders must exist — a proportion like that of false Corots. Rarity, high reputation among a few patrons, and the deceptive mystery of his style, tempted the faking fraternity from the first. That they were at work in his lifetime is shown by a letter of his in 1915: "I rarely sign my paintings, having always felt that they spoke for themselves;



but . . . I am sorry to say, a great many spurious Ryders have lately come upon the market."

The fakers had little understanding of Ryder's art, and although he painted many subjects, they concentrated on moonlit marines with lone boats, turning them out by the hundreds. In the end they ceased to know which were his genuine pictures, and copied each other. Most "Ryders" one sees today (including some in museums and well-known collections) have only the remotest relation to his style. Here is one of America's greatest artists, who died less than thirty years ago, but whose art is almost lost to us, buried under an avalanche of fakes.

Blakelock's case is like Ryder's; he was extensively forged during the years when insanity prevented his working, while his prices were rising. Yet even for Ryder and Blakelock there is far more factual data than for most colonial artists; at least half their genuine pictures have irrefutable histories or other proof of authenticity, and this nucleus can be used as a standard by which to judge doubtful works.

With Ryder and Blakelock, scientific examination is essential. Ryder's technique was unorthodox (tragically so for the preservation of his pictures), with underpaintings, overpaintings and glazes. Examination by x-ray, ultra-violet light and microscope, conducted by the writer with the cooperation of Sheldon Keck of the Brooklyn Museum, is building up knowledge of his technical methods. Fortunately the fakers have been too stupid to understand them, and have tried to duplicate his effects by the shortcut of direct, opaque painting over a heavy blank ground, the whole smothered in golden varnish. Hence x-ray and microscope usually reveal decided differences from Ryder's technique. Artificially induced crackling can generally be distinguished from that caused by age and Ryder's strange methods. The most curious case found in our investigation was one of painted crackle so skillfully executed as to be deceptive until examined under magnification (see illustration).

In painting a forgery, the faker's first concern is to get an old canvas or panel, which usually means an old painting. Often he neglects to clean off the old picture, so that the x-ray discloses some strange works underneath, such as the sentimental picture of a child beneath the so-called Ryder of *Moses Breaking the Tablets of the Law*, illustrated herewith. The presence of another picture in a different style is of course not conclusive proof of forgery, since a penurious artist might conceivably paint over another's picture; but it is at the very least suspicious. When one

finds none of the painter's genuine works showing such an idiosyncrasy, while many dubious works do, the suspicion grows.

With a painting of relatively direct, simple technique, such as most of Homer's work, laboratory examination is not essential; the painting's essential structure is visible to the naked eye. But if the technique is at all complex or there are signs of repaintings or of another picture underneath, examination by x-ray and microscope is indicated. The microscope, through which one can study superimposed layers of varnish and pigment, or examine minute samples of pigment in cross-section, often reveals as much of the painting's inner structure as x-ray does. It is particularly useful when applied to signatures. If much varnish can be seen between signature and background, or if cracks in the background do not extend into the signature but are covered by it, this indicates that the signature was added at a later date — again not complete proof of the picture's falsity, but suspicious.

There is much popular misunderstanding of the value of scientific examination. People are apt to think that an x-ray of a painting is as clear a diagnosis as an x-ray of a broken leg. Actually, physical factors sometimes make scientific examination next to useless. In any case, it alone seldom furnishes decisive proof. It can help, by producing evidence not visible to the unaided eye. But in the last analysis, opinions as to authorship (in the absence of external proof) come down to the judgment of experts familiar with the artist's style. Scientific examination is an additional tool for the expert, but in the end it is his eye and his knowledge that count. Attribution is a matter of balancing many factors — documentary evidence, history, style, date, technique, condition. Most mistakes are made by taking too few factors into consideration. In this field more than in most, a little knowledge is a dangerous thing. As part of his equipment the research worker should know how to read an x-ray, to use a microscope, and to examine paintings under ultra-violet light.

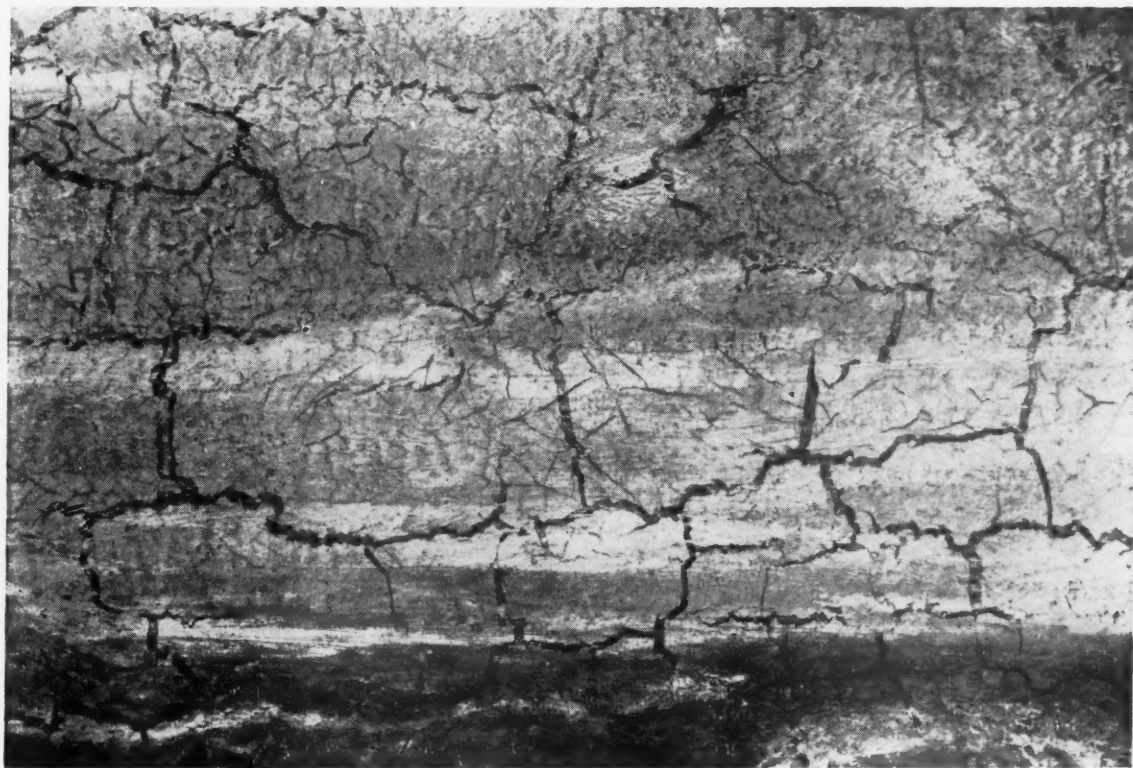
To deal with the problem of authenticity in the broadest way, we need not only more scholarship but greater public awareness of the problem. Without this, the faker will continue to multiply his wares and to find his innocent victims. This is brought home by the case of Thomas Eakins, who until recently was seldom forged, no doubt partly because of the existence of a published catalogue of his work, but who is now being more frequently faked as his reputation and prices increase. This illustrates the need not only for scholarship but for wider understanding of the problem on the part of collectors, dealers, museums and the public. There is also



MOSES BREAKING THE TABLETS OF THE LAW, SIGNED "RYDER"

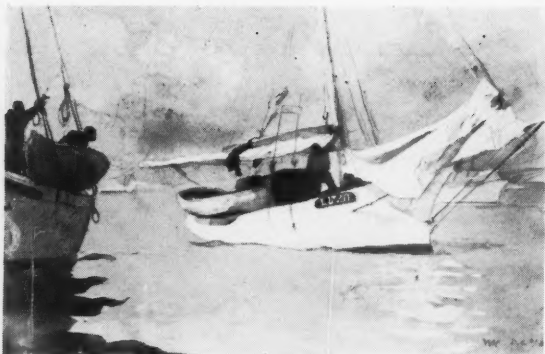


X-RAY OF THE PAINTING AT THE LEFT



DETAIL OF A PAINTING SIGNED "RYDER," SHOWING PAINTED CRACKLE  
*Courtesy of the Brooklyn Museum*





WINSLOW HOMER: FISHING BOATS, KEY WEST  
Watercolor, 1903 (with details)  
*Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York*

WATERCOLOR SIGNED "W. H."  
(with details)

need for more knowledge of the legal remedies, and more use of them. Few cases of this kind have been brought to court, because of the understandable reluctance of the victims to expose their errors in judgment. It is to be hoped that this reluctance may be overcome in the public interest.

Authentication and attribution, after all, are not ends in themselves. They are jobs that have to be done because of past neglect. They have their fascination, like detective work, but they should be thought of as necessary evils, to be done away with ultimately. One of the chief aims of the American Art Research Council is to reduce or prevent such problems in the future, at least for American art since the Civil War. This may help to hasten the day when our scholars will no longer have to devote so much of their energies to problems of authenticity, however intriguing, but will be released for more constructive functions.

### III

The scholarly study of nineteenth-century American art, of the kind we have been discussing, is a development of the last ten years or so. Previous to that, whatever scholarship existed in American art was confined to the colonial field, to which time had given the status of old-master-ship. There were books on many leading figures of the later period, including Allston, Morse, Harding, Sully, Cole, Durand, Bingham, Hunt, Fuller, Rimmer, Inness, Whistler, La Farge, Martin, Homer, Saint-Gaudens, Sargent and Chase, but with one or two exceptions these books were biographies and appreciations, full of chatty personal information, but with no attempt at any thorough or systematic record of the artists' works.

But as interest in the American past grew, as horizons were widened to take in many schools and individuals previously dismissed as provincial, and as the wealth, variety and vitality of the century's artistic achievement became clearer, more and more of our scholars were attracted to the period, especially those of the younger generation. They found in it the pleasure of discovery, of studying art which had a vital relation to our own times, and of tapping rich yet untouched source material. Some of the results have already been published as books or exhibition catalogues; but much more are still in progress, the work of students in museums and colleges or unaffiliated, which will see the light in the next few years. A recent and encouraging sign is the increasing number of college students, graduate and undergraduate, who are selecting nineteenth-century subjects for theses. The time may not be far off when most of our major artists of the century will have received the kind of scholarly study long ago given to European figures of the same relative importance in their own countries.



## RECORDING CONTEMPORARY ART

By HERMON MORE

THE body of knowledge that students of American art have inherited from the past is, to say the least, attenuated. It languished because of that lack of nourishment at the roots which can be supplied only by well-documented factual information. In search of authentic evidence students of our past have been forced to grope through an atmosphere heavy with the aroma of good cigars and old port, to listen to interminable anecdotes and gossip, occasionally interspersed with critical observations. This prevailing air of dilettantism has resulted in a great many opinions about our past art, but the sources of these opinions, the works of art themselves, because they have not been accurately described and their whereabouts noted, are often veiled in mystery, so that present-day scholars are forced to disperse too great a proportion of their energies in laborious acts of detection. This lack of reliable information has led to many wrong attributions, often of innocent intention, and to outright deception by forgeries.

In order to start now to prevent, in so far as it is possible to do so, the recurrence of these conditions, by handing on to the future a more substantial record of our times, the American Art Research Council from the beginning has made the recording of contemporary art an essential part of its activities. Research in its usual meaning of scholarly investigation is perhaps not the exact word to describe the process of collecting and recording factual data on contemporary painting and sculpture, where the facts are so readily accessible. The method has nothing to do with opinion or attribution, and is purely objective. Its purpose is to make records, as complete and accurate as possible, of the works of living artists, and to preserve them for the future.

Exactly what the future will find most useful is of course impossible to foretell. In undertaking this program the organizers were well aware of the fallibility of contemporary judgments, and knew that every generation has been inclined to overestimate the lasting importance of its art, and that in all probability our own would be no exception. Unquestionably, any program of research in contemporary art is bound to be something of a gamble with posterity in which some losses are to be expected. But allowing for a certain amount of wasted effort, the job seems well worth doing, and certainly is in accord with the spirit of the art of our times, which is experimental and adventurous.

The extent and diversity of contemporary art make the problem of selecting the artists to be recorded extremely difficult. Neither time nor the academy can aid with their sifting-out processes; we are in a complex world of fluctuating values with only personal taste to guide us. Without the academy exercising its ancient right to scrutinize the credentials of aspirants, a mass migration to Parnassus has set in. Academic dogma has been replaced by almost equally dogmatic unorthodoxy. Most of the successive movements of European origin have found adherents in this country, and we have added a few native varieties. These evidences of the vitality of our art have attracted an ever-growing public. Museums and galleries throughout the country are devoting an increasingly larger proportion of their activities to contemporary art and are constantly searching for new talents. Indeed it would seem that today obscurity is almost impossible to attain. Never in our history have so many artists of widely divergent points-of-view claimed our attention. Critical equilibrium in these circumstances is hard to maintain, and choice of candidates for the Council's activities, difficult to make.

With no absolute standards and little precedent to sustain us, there is nevertheless some reassurance to be gained from history. Examination of critical estimations of the past shows that while some significant artists were overlooked and others were not always regarded at what we today consider their full worth, a great proportion were recognized and their positions pretty accurately evaluated. Really neglected figures like Quidor, Eakins or Blakelock were the exceptions rather than the rule; and even some of them were recognized in old age. Broadly considered, contemporary judgments have more often been right than wrong. If we spread our net wide enough, it is quite possible to take in most of what is worth recording in contemporary art.

Taking into account all these considerations — the wide range and variety of contemporary art, the relativity of present standards of judgment, and the changes of valuations to be expected in the future — it would seem wise to be inclusive rather than exclusive. The Council therefore adopted a broad policy of selection, naming a hundred living painters and sculptors whose work was to be recorded. Their names were chosen by vote of the Council's Advisory Committee of museum directors and curators and university representatives. The artists were asked to make lists of their works, with essential information such as titles, medium, size and ownership, and to deposit these lists with the Council. The response was surprising, even to those who have worked with artists for years.

In spite of the considerable amount of work involved, artists and dealers proved by their cooperation that they realized the importance of the project, and many of them wrote heartily endorsing it. The resulting lists will be used not only as firsthand records for the future but as a basis for further study. Twenty of the hundred — artists of established reputation whose future status seems as certain as anything in the changing world of taste can be — have been so far chosen for fuller recording by the Council's staff. With their assistance and their dealers', complete records are being compiled of their works, including full physical data, history, exhibitions, reproductions, dates, etc.; and photographs are being collected. The number of living artists being studied in this way will be increased as the Council's staff and facilities permit. The same process is being applied to ten artists of the recent past whose families and friends are in a position to help. Of the late Marsden Hartley, for example, a complete photographic and documentary record is being made in cooperation with the executor of his estate, Hudson D. Walker.

The labor required may seem arduous, but not in comparison with the effort demanded in research into the past, when the sources of firsthand information have disappeared. For research in contemporary art has the great advantage of strategic position. The artist himself can furnish the information, and his participation assures that the result will be authentic and accurate records on which the future can base its own researches.

# Special Types of Research



## RESEARCH IN THE COLLEGES

By G. HAYDN HUNTLEY

THE office of research in the college is to be the handmaid of teaching, and in no field of study is the necessity for constant research of more importance than in the history of art. The teacher of this subject must be continually reviewing and rediscovering works of art; he must be reinterpreting them in order to bring them back to life as he himself and the times change, otherwise the art he is talking about will lose its meaning for him and, consequently, for his pupils. The good teacher must not only be abreast of his times; he must be helping to create them, and he can do so only through the power that he gains by making his own original and diligent investigations, in other words, by doing research. Research is the creative force of teaching. In a way the reverse is also true: colleges will not produce research in fields which are not taught. If a greater volume of research in American art is to come from our institutions of higher learning, it must be accompanied by more teaching in this field.

The activities of museums, dealers, publishers, and the scholars themselves, indicate that there is the kind of demand for knowledge of American art which will lead to a more extensive and more thorough teaching of it. Actually, there has been a rapid growth in the number of courses on American art. Also, in the colleges this demand is emphasized by an increased call for the integration of American art in general humanities courses and in the programs of more advanced students who have chosen the United States or modern times as their areas of concentration. Furthermore, students in graduate departments, deprived of the possibilities of going abroad, have been choosing dissertation subjects in American art in increasing numbers.<sup>1</sup>

This demand introduces a question of utmost importance: namely, are professors really prepared to teach the history of American art? The answer is *no*, with the exception of a few scholars whose research has given them a great deal more knowledge than can be had from the books and

<sup>1</sup>Further details on these trends can be found in the May, 1945, issue of the *College Art Journal*, which was largely devoted to the study of American art in the colleges, with Alfred H. Barr, Jr., acting as advisory editor.

works of art which are readily accessible. These few scholars would be the first to recognize that their own studies were but tentative and fragmentary contributions; and, as a consequence, that their capacities for teaching in the field were quite limited. Nor can the student, or the teacher, hope to gain much from the older standard books which are not only obsolete, but also uncritical and, therefore, virtually useless. Likewise the studies on our art in relationship to its cultural *milieu* are seldom adequate and always restricted in scope and penetration because of their pioneer character. Thus in American art, even more than in other fields, research is a necessity in order to produce the tools for teaching, to train new teachers, and to keep the older teachers good teachers.

Methods of research employed in colleges do not differ from those used elsewhere when the problem is the same. A survey of what has been done and is being done will show that. We believe, however, that the most notable contributions from the colleges in American art are apt to appear in those studies which relate the development of art to general cultural and social developments not only in this country but in the whole of Western civilization. The recent studies in Greek Revival architecture and romantic painting give emphasis to this point because they clearly emphasize both the international ramifications of these movements and the interrelationship of art with the life and interests of the time. The needs of colleges in general humanities courses and in area studies also indicate such a trend. In any case, the training in our graduate schools for future teachers of American art should encompass not only a background of the whole history of art with special attention to modern European art, but also a rich and varied training in philosophy, literature, and the various aspects of history (political, sociological, etc.). For example, this training should be such that if a teacher is called upon to lecture on the Gothic Revival in America, he will have a sound knowledge of the development of that movement in England and on the continent of Europe. He should have a firsthand knowledge of the writings of such authors as Goethe, the Schlegels, Pugin, Ruskin, Eastlake, and Viollet-le-Duc. He should have read the poetry and novels of the period, for example those of Sir Walter Scott, and be familiar with their repercussions on Western thought. The Oxford movement and other religious tendencies of the time should mean something definite to him. All these and many more threads he should be able to tie into the mesh which produced the Gothic revival in America and kept medieval architecture a source of inspiration to our architects for a century. Naturally, this kind of preparation is not easily nor rapidly



acquired. We shall find that the proper training of a teacher or research worker in American art is as arduous as in any other field.

The advantages which research in American art offer the nascent teacher and the established teacher are many, and for the most part quite obvious. First of all, it is less expensive because it entails less travel. Then it is more convenient in the sense that the scholar can get in touch with the material he is studying readily, so that he can make full use of short periods of leisure for research. Also, it has the advantage of immediacy: it is the art of our own civilization, and to a great extent of recent times. By the same token it is highly appreciated by a larger audience of the public than any other field, with the result that the scholar is encouraged to produce for that public. Another aspect of the immediate and warm reception of studies in American art, which may be of great value in the college, is that such studies may help to break down the hostility of teachers of the practice of art to scholarship in the history of art.

Related to these advantages to the teacher is the fact that competent research in our art will eventually lead to an increase of American prestige abroad. It is particularly important at the present time that other nations respect not only the industrial and scientific progress of our nation, but also our cultural achievements. It is obvious also that the one field in which our own historians of art can surely be paramount is the American.

We have pointed out above that increased research in American art in the colleges will depend on the expansion of the teaching of that subject. Many of our art departments have grown like Topsy: new courses and whole new fields often have been added without adjustments being made in the student's responsibility to master the previously established disciplines. Expansion in American art, or any other field, calls for a reintegration of the curriculum, and a new balancing of just what should be expected from the student as his general knowledge of the entire field of art. Additions to educational requirements demand compensatory deductions.

Also, if the teaching of American art is to be furthered in the colleges, it will be either at the expense of other important fields or by adding new members to art departments. The former alternative is hard to face; the latter means the appropriation of money for new salaries, equipment, and research. In the history of art, and this holds true for the study of American art, the costs of equipment and material and of travel are so demanding in relationship to present salaries that too few American scholars can pursue research. It follows, therefore, that if we are to have better teach-

ing in this field, the economic situation of the teachers must be improved by giving them the means of adding to their education through research and travel. To be effective, this aid must be continuous, not sporadic in the form of special grants. Also, the distribution of time of instructors should be seriously reconsidered; leisure is indispensable for research, and no one harassed by administrative duties and overloaded with lecturing will be able to make significant contributions. Too much teaching prevents research and means poor teaching.

*Conclusions:* To promote knowledge of American art, that art must be taught more extensively in our institutions of higher learning. It must be integrated into the curriculum. To insure that it be well taught it must be accompanied by research on the part of the teacher. Research costs time and money. These facilities must be provided either by the individual institutions or by some kind of endowed foundation.

## REGIONAL STUDIES

By PORTER BUTTS

I REMEMBER that when I first proposed, somewhat tentatively, the writing of a history of art in Wisconsin as one way to celebrate the state's centennial in 1936, a leading historian of the West said: "Try it if you will, but a number of us have canvassed the materials of Middle West history for years and found nothing of artistic importance; so I'm afraid you will be writing the history of zero."

True enough, one who goes to the library to study the story of art development in almost any region west of the Alleghenies will not be encouraged. I found that virtually nothing had been written about Wisconsin art or artists before 1915. The publications of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters, for example, do not reveal one art title from the date of the Academy's founding in the early '70's to the present time; in 1600 pages of a 1931 *History of Milwaukee* there is not one suggestion that Milwaukee ever had a painter or sculptor. The chief historians of Wisconsin and the frontier do not make even a passing reference to the arts.

But the farther I searched, turning the pages of early newspapers, writing and talking to older artists, digging into manuscripts, the more impressive became the evidence that something happened, and finally there was a

fascinating story. I came to realize that what was missing was not an art history for this region but an art historian. There were artists by the score, even in the earliest years of statehood, flourishing art organizations, and a healthy art patronage. But no one had taken the trouble to say so.

Further, it soon became clear that art events in the Ohio and Mississippi Valleys from early territorial days closely paralleled what was happening in the settled East. Chester Harding drifted as far west as Vincennes, Indiana, in 1820, stopping to teach art. Thomas Cole painted his first sketches from nature along the Ohio River in 1823. By the early 1830's George Caleb Bingham of Missouri had sown the seeds for portrait and genre painting west of the Mississippi matching in period and quality William Mount's, R. Caton Woodville's, and Eastman Johnson's work in New York and New England. Dunlap's copy of West's *Death on a Pale Horse* was exhibited in Milwaukee in 1844, only a few years after it was painted. Wisconsin became a state in 1848, and six years later the Historical Society had arranged for R. M. Sully, Thomas Sully's nephew, to be a kind of official state painter of its public men, native Indians, and historic battlegrounds. Eastman Johnson painted some of his first portraits in Wisconsin in 1856. An art union flourished there in the '50's and in Ohio in the '40's. And as Emanuel Leutze was finishing his *Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way* mural in the national capitol in 1861, Carl Wimar of Missouri was starting his mural of *Westward the Star of Empire Takes Its Course* in the St. Louis court house.

If there were differences in art development between the East and West in the nineteenth century they were differences not in point of time but in density of artistic population, differences not in the fact of performance but perhaps in the quality of performance. I bring this point forward to illustrate one of the services of regional art studies. Reading the general histories of American art, one would not be aware that the Middle and Far West even existed in the nineteenth century except as a blank spot on our cultural map. The histories of American art development to 1900 are essentially histories of art on the Atlantic seaboard. Comprehensive regional studies may well be the means of bringing together the source materials out of which a further and better history of American art can be written.

In addition, for the broader uses of general social history, it does not appear too optimistic to hope that studies in detail of the whole story of a limited area, from its first settlement to the twentieth century, will inform us better how our cultural life in any given region came to be what it is.

The investigator needs, of course, to look at the life that surrounds the artist — the economic forces, the social values, the advance of science, the ideals of the time, the often decisive role played by the public as patron and critic — if he is to account for the state of the arts. He will find advantage in taking a whole community and its cultural life as his point of departure, rather than describing as has been done only too often, a series of art works and artists as though they operated in a vacuum.

It is then that the answers to such hitherto unexplored questions as the following will come to light: Is the region the cultural dependent of the Eastern states or of Europe? Has it made any contribution to American art? Is it behind or ahead of its neighbors? What is the function of the artist in his own community?

To do the story for the nineteenth century means finding one's own way about. It means patiently turning the pages of countless ancient newspapers, not forgetting the advertisements. It means consulting the manuscripts, letters, reports, and necrology files of the local historical societies. (There will be few direct art titles in the catalogues; the art story is usually an incident to something else). It means reading the general histories of the area for an understanding of the social, political, and economic climate. It means visits up and down the state to historic houses and local museums, examining paintings hanging there and seeking out old clippings and letters. It means interviews with elderly artist-residents (the art history of many states is spanned by the lifetime of its oldest living artists). It means letter-writing to relatives who may have an artist's diaries, clippings, paintings, and photographs. The trails are often obscure. But one can be reasonably confident that the primary sources exist.

A quest of this kind has in it the buoyant possibility of a find. I remember very well some of the rewards which sustained me in a sometimes dreary search. There were the twenty-two self-portrait sketches by George Catlin, done about 1821 as an exercise in illustrating the varied emotions of man; they hung for years above the bar at the Marine Saloon in Green Bay, Wisconsin, and reveal rather better than anything else found to date Catlin's original talent. There was the portrait in the State Historical Museum that adds to the known works of Eastman Johnson; primitives of the 1850's that help to reveal where Grant Wood's style came from; paintings of the cowboys and Indians of the western plains by Richard Lorenz, unknown outside Milwaukee, which were made as early as Frederic Remington's and which to me are in many ways superior; the almost unbelievable recording job of Frederick Perkins who, beginning in the





GEORGE CATLIN: SNEER



GEORGE CATLIN: LUNACY

*Neville Museum, Green Bay, Wisconsin*



1860's, collected 36,000 stone and copper implements in Wisconsin and faithfully painted 1300 of them, doing for Indian archeologists what Audubon did for naturalists.

By talking to an aging German panorama painter in Milwaukee I learned how an enterprising businessman brought a whole colony of panorama painters from Germany to Milwaukee (instead of importing the panoramas as others had done), an event which largely shaped the course of Wisconsin's art development for more than a quarter-century. But that wasn't all. Gradually there came into relief a whole era of American panorama painting, as yet little noticed, which if fully recorded would reveal another flourishing folk art and show us an astonishing ancestor of the sound moving picture and the New York World's Fair perisphere. These early panoramas, some almost a mile long and twelve feet high, did actually move across the stage in two-hour performances, to the accompaniment of voice, sound effects, and even smoke and smells.

Even if the investigation of a region discovers no genius or distinctive art development, it nevertheless is worth the doing. It will still have the value of adding to our general art histories a broader picture of America as a whole, and the vitality of being of use to the cultural life of one's own state. It will almost surely round out the story of some important artist whose activity in the region was hitherto undisclosed.

If nineteenth-century art west of Ohio is an apparent void for want of an historian, the regional biographer has the means at hand to see that the twentieth century fares better. True, we may not discern clearly the significant men or movements, working with them at so close a range. But it is doubtful that Vasari calculated historic significance precisely. And still we find Vasari's lives indispensable in filling out the story of the Renaissance and its men. What makes him valuable to us is his contemporaneity. I would hope that the regional art historian might function as a kind of Vasari for his region. He can supply for his chosen area much of the information over which future critics and connoisseurs would otherwise take issue. Why not provide them with the main truths while they can still be learned firsthand, from the artists and from the extant records? (Much of what we know about frontier life and the westward movement is due to the efforts of one man who adopted this view, Lyman Draper of the Wisconsin Historical Society. In the middle nineteenth century when the West was being made he visited and interviewed hundreds of pioneers living in the Mississippi Valley, collecting the diaries, letters, and biographies that make up the famous Draper manuscript collection, which

has been a principal reliance of countless social, political, and economic historians).

Is not this kind of research a more promising and valid enterprise for at least some of our graduating art historians than to labor over which part of the Ghent altarpiece was done by Jan Van Eyck and which by Hubert? The time is now, now while the artists are living, while their work can be fully recorded, and while there are still elder artists who for many states can tell revealing parts of the story back almost to the beginning.

## THE STUDY OF FOLK ART

By JEAN LIPMAN

THE first exhibitions of American folk art were held in 1924 in Kent, Connecticut, and at the Whitney Studio Club and the Dudensing Gallery in New York. During the intervening twenty years dozens of important exhibitions have familiarized the public with this native American painting and sculpture. Numerous articles and several books have added to its popular interest. Yet we are just now beginning to think in terms of serious research and established critical opinion for this branch of American art. Among the most basic questions that might be asked about folk art are the following:

What is its place in the history of American art?

What is its significance as an aesthetic expression?

What are its chief characteristics?

What are the stylistic bases for appraising individual examples?

If these questions could be widely posed and satisfactorily answered, folk art would be critically defined and evaluated as have been all other major fields of American art — the early portraiture, nineteenth-century landscape and genre, and modern art. This brief article cannot categorically answer all these questions. It can however point to the need for answering them, and the possibility of doing so by sifting and formulating the findings of the last twenty years.

Its place in our art history seems to be, very simply, that of representing the first native tradition in American art. Folk art was a spontaneous home-grown art. It was non-derivative and non-academic. It sprang up in the late eighteenth century as an artistic product of our new democracy, and flourished through the first three quarters of the nineteenth century



ESTHER TUTTLE

Watercolor portrait executed by Joseph H. Davis "left hand painter." Strafford, N. H., 1836  
*New-York Historical Society*



MARINER

Anonymous carved sign for a nautical instrument maker's shop, New Bedford, c. 1830  
*Old Dartmouth Historical Society and Whaling Museum, New Bedford, Massachusetts*

as the most purely American tradition in American art. This pioneer art, finding its inspiration in the robust American people and the unromanticized American scene, based only on a firsthand knowledge of craftsmanship and on the assumption that any one who wanted could learn to paint or carve, was American to the core. It was an original and independent art. It was indeed a free artistic expression of the principles of the young American democracy. This is its place in the history of American art.

Not many years ago examples of folk art were salvaged as quaint antiques rather than collected as art. One hurdle at least has been definitely passed; folk art is now considered as an aesthetic expression worthy of being measured against other art forms of other times and places. Its basic character is generally recognized as its non-optical style. Because the simplicity of the artist's vision and the limitations of his technique made way for a compensating emphasis on pure design, abstract design became the heart of his achievement. The quality of this "primitive" style as exemplified in the best folk art is perhaps open to discussion. In the opinion of this writer it is great art, judged by any standards. General critical opinion is now at last evaluating folk art in a positive manner, for what it is; while a few years ago it was negatively described as crude, stiff, distorted, by critics whose touchstone of value was optical illusionism. Because the aesthetic value of folk art is seen as residing in its abstract qualities, it is praised as original, lucid, formalized.

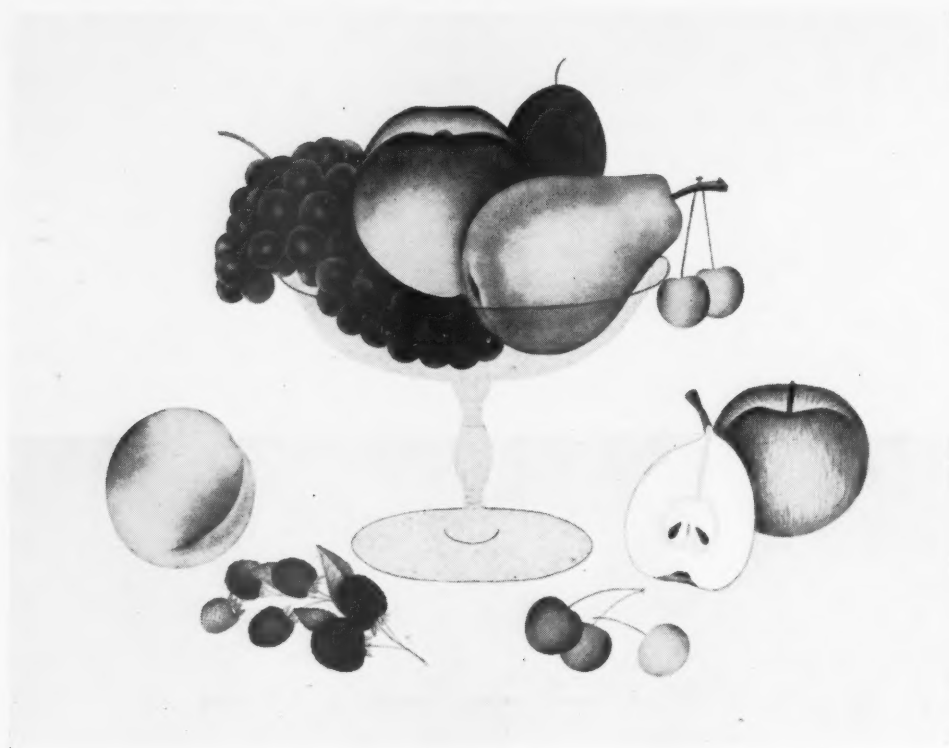
The shift in critical attitude shows signs of growing apace. Today it is not considered too radical to believe that some of the highly gifted amateur artists arrived at a power and originality that rival the work of the great academicians. It is possible to suggest that the homespun American tradition which the folk artists represented equals in importance the finished Anglo-American tradition founded by Gilbert Stuart and Benjamin West. Native American art appears to be coming to primary significance in our art history; and our masterpieces of folk art, as the best examples of this early native tradition, are beginning to be subjected to scholarly study.

Granted a fundamental and permanent place in the history of American art, it becomes important to establish the history and define the characteristics of folk art and to evaluate individual examples. Much has been written about this, and it is not within the province of this paper to enter into detailed analyses. It seems important however to point out a few of the most generally accepted misconceptions.

Folk art has been popularized as the product of a small number of anony-

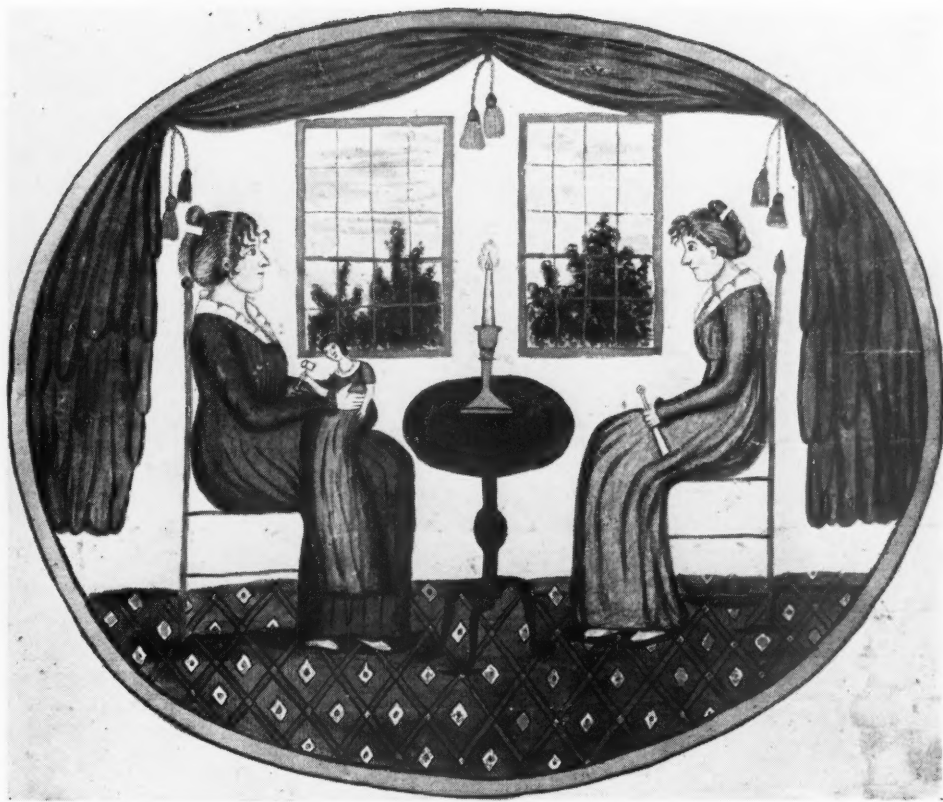


mous artists who were entirely untaught. None of this is true. There were, instead of the traditional "handful" of folk artists, literally thousands who painted for pleasure or profit during the first three quarters of the nineteenth century. Carpenters and cabinet makers carved statuettes and American eagles. House and sign painters took to painting portraits and scenes, and frescoing walls. Housewives occupied leisure hours making velvet and watercolor "pieces." Young ladies learned theorem painting in the seminaries along with reading, writing, dancing, and sewing. This was a creative time in our history. The average American was eager to try his hand at painting or carving or decorating something, and thousand upon thousand pieces of amateur art were produced in the nineteenth century. The fact that this writer has been able to list the *names* of over three hundred folk painters should tend to disprove both the theory of the small number of these artists, and their almost universal anonymity. Actually, of course, there are a dozen anonymous primitives for every one named, but recently names are emerging from limbo, and important bodies of folk art are being linked with personalities and careers. A few years



STILL LIFE

By Emma Cady of New Lebanon, New York. Watercolor, c. 1820  
*Halladay-Thomas Collection, Sheffield, Massachusetts*

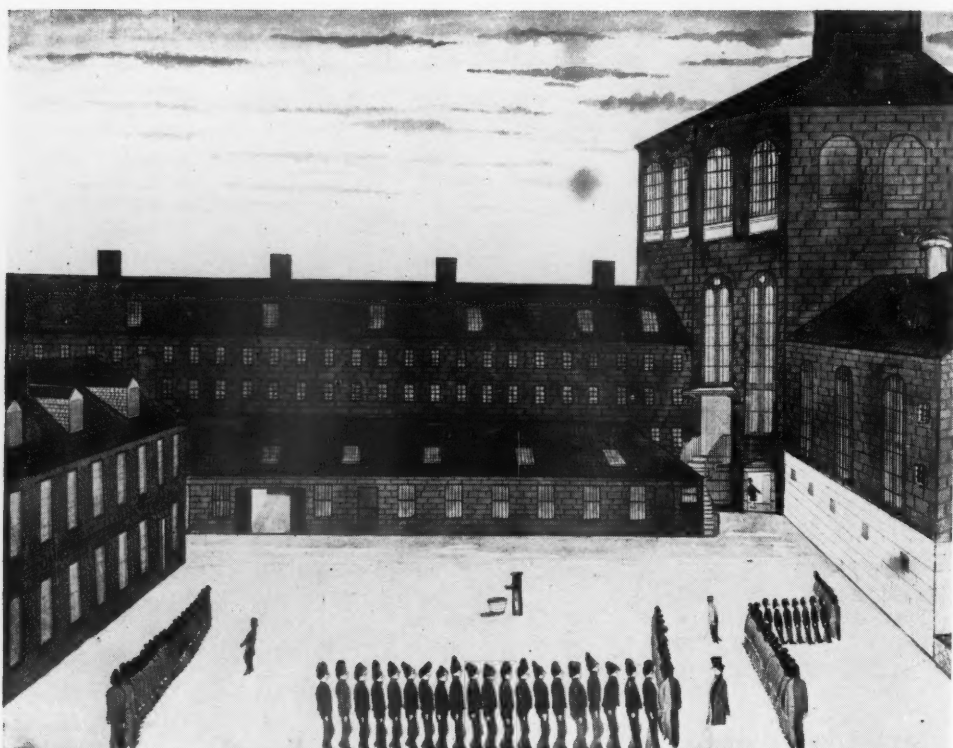


TWO WOMEN

Watercolor painted by Eunice Pinney in Windsor, Connecticut, c. 1810  
*Private Collection*

ago when primitive painting was mentioned, Hicks and Pickett were the only names that came readily to mind. Now one hears of Davis, Bradley, Stock, Willson, Pinney, Headley, Ellsworth, Field, Bascom, Krans, and many others, each of whose career and *oeuvre* has been published. Finally, the folk artists were not typically "untaught." They were not taught according to academic standards; but they had a distinct sort of informal self-training, based on the popular art instruction books which were published by the score in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

In attempting to estimate and evaluate the product of the folk artists there are numerous preconceived ideas that we must also abandon before getting started. Research in folk art involves a different set of problems than for our more conventional American art, and we cannot successfully approach the study of the folk artists armed with the critics' accepted standards for "early Americana" or "early American painting." Most of



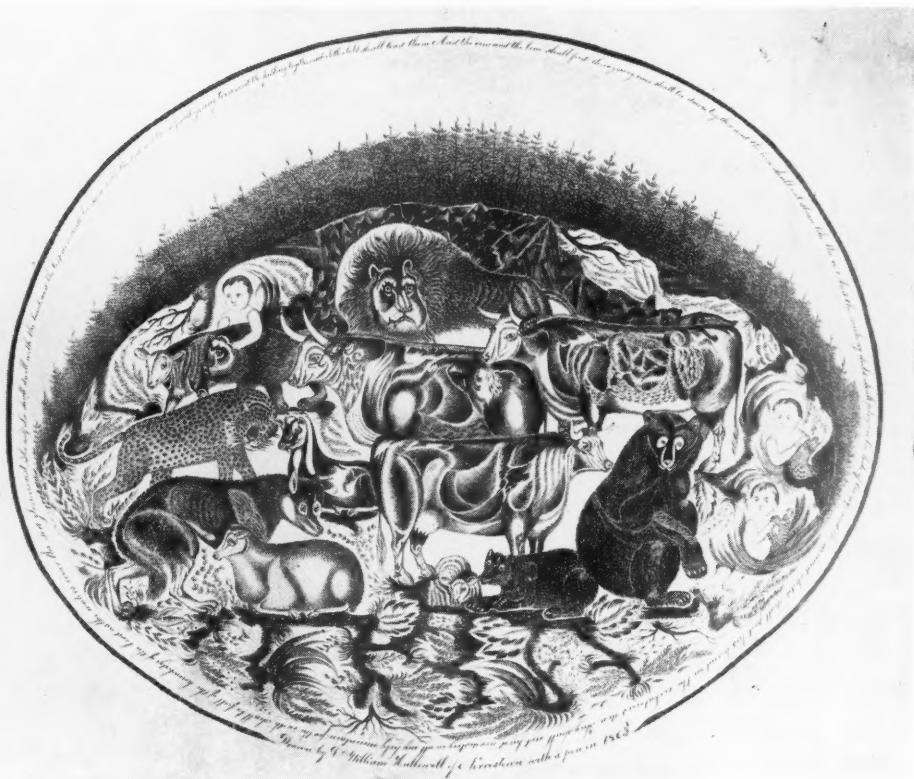
CHARLESTOWN PRISON  
Anonymous watercolor, mid-19th century  
*American Folk Art Gallery, New York*

these, applied to folk art, prove to be boomerangs. Here are a few critical warnings for the folk art field:

Don't think of examples of folk art as significant in direct proportion to their early date. This may apply to American antiques, but the fact is that the most noteworthy body of folk art was produced around the middle of the nineteenth century.

The size of a primitive painting or sculpture is unimportant. The "larger the better" school of thought definitely does not apply, for the primitive artists were modest in their methods and intentions and characteristically worked best in fairly small scale.

A named product is not necessarily superior to a piece by that great master of folk art, "Anonymous." Many of the masterpieces of folk art cannot be named. The *Quilting Party* and *Child in Red High Chair* in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art are good examples of anonymous masterpieces, as are the unidentified pieces here reproduced. Just because a large body of work can be assembled under one name — the much pub-



PEACEABLE KINGDOM

"Drawn by Dr. William Hallowell of Norristown (Pa.) with a pen in 1865"  
*Primitives Gallery of Harry Stone, New York*

licized landscapes by Chambers and portraits by Prior are cases in point — does not at all necessarily endow it with value as folk art.

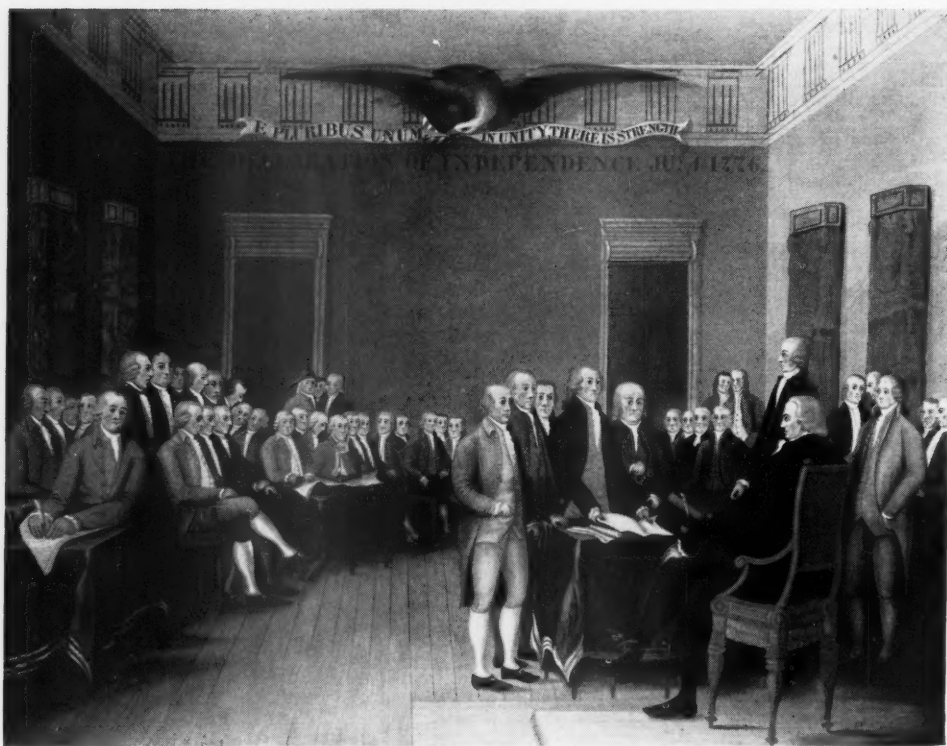
Don't look for "schools" of painting in the field of folk art; there were none. The single piece of painting or sculpture is of interest in proportion to its individuality rather than its relationship to established and recognizable groups.

The provenance and history of a folk painting or sculpture are relatively unimportant. The fact that it came from some famous collection or was owned by a president may lend an aura to an antique or to a Gilbert Stuart, but has little to do with the significance of our unpretentious folk art. The *Darkytown* reproduced is a good case for all the points mentioned up to here: date — c. 1860; size — 18 by 24 inches; authorship — anonymous; it is no more closely related to the work of any early American artist than to Dali; its history? — secured, according to the dealer who owned it, from a negro junkman who offered it in exchange for a dollar





DARKYTOWN  
Anonymous oil painting on glass, c. 1860  
*Private Collection*



DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE  
By Quaker preacher Edward Hicks, after Trumbull's famous painting. Oil on canvas, c. 1830  
*Collection of Captain Richard A. Loeb, Hampton, New Jersey*

and a bottle of whiskey! And yet the design of this little primitive endows it with the authentic stamp of greatness.

Another fallacious idea which tends to attach itself to critical appraisals of primitive painting is that the watercolors are of minor interest — that only a large oil is of real consequence from the collector's standpoint. Actually, the folk artists excelled in the watercolor medium, which most perfectly recorded the crisp linear design and clear flat color areas which distinguish the primitive vision. There are at least two outstanding primitive watercolors for every oil.

A very natural critical judgment is that only original conceptions have any validity — in folk art or any other art. As a matter of fact, though, the folk painters often achieved true masterpieces when "copying" academic paintings or engravings. The copy, far from imitating the original, characteristically achieved a simple formalized version of a sophisticated design which contained the very essence of primitive style. Such a painting is Hicks' version of Trumbull's *Declaration of Independence* which we reproduce. Analysing the differential between the academic original and the primitive copy offers an excellent way of defining the essentials of primitive style, and this style is here seen at its height of achievement. Bold as it may seem we suggest that Hicks' serene open design clearly surpasses the original composition, and stands out as one of our masterpieces of American painting. The fact that Hicks' point of departure was an important Trumbull painting rather than a scene he had viewed or read about is as inconsequential in judging the validity of his canvas as is, in appraising a great Dürer drawing, the fact that it was adapted from a painting by Gentile Bellini.

Because our modern American art is drawing constantly closer to the independent non-academic attitude of our folk artists, we are developing an untrammelled critical appreciation of this early native art. The twentieth-century artists preceded the critics in praising folk art, and were the first to collect it. They recognized in the unselfconscious clarity of design, the simple forms and bold color of the primitives, the essence of the formalized style they were deliberately developing. The quality of the design is the final basis for judging the merit of a folk painting or sculpture, and our modern eye is well attuned to pass fair judgment. The subject matter may add to the interest of a primitive painting; its condition is of course important; but the calibre of its design will be recognized as the heart of its worth. If a collector wished to list the points most essential to a good example of folk art, these would lie within the design itself, which must

have clarity and quality. As is the case for all great art, the great primitive must have a *uniform* style and quality within the picture or sculpture area. Specifically — and this is of course not applicable to academic or illusionistic types of art — the design of the primitive depends primarily on a stylized combination of sharp simple forms and clear linear pattern and, in a painting, bold distinct colors. These “points” for primitives can be further amplified and analysed and it should be done by every collector and student of folk art. This will become increasingly important when our great museums begin to consider it essential to include in their American collections representative examples of our best native art.

It seems likely that a long overdue revaluation of folk art will be accelerated by our present intensified interest in all phases of the American tradition. This should in turn provide the stimulus for an intensive study of the field, for identifying, classifying and analysing examples. The chief instrument for this research will probably be the exhibition. Rather than the general surveys heretofore planned to exhibit folk art there may eventually be specialized scholarly exhibitions. There could be a group show designed to reconstruct the artistic personalities that are emerging from the mass of anonymous folk art. Another exhibition could show the various media used by the primitive painters — watercolor, oil and pastel. The types of folk art — portraits, landscapes, genre, still life — could be separately displayed within one exhibition. The folk art of various regions, and its evolution through two centuries, could be the themes of special exhibitions. Particularly valuable would be a background exhibition featuring the early art instruction books which were the teachers of the folk artists, and some of the craft painting and carving which determined their techniques. Juxtapositions of academic and primitive art and of American and European primitives would help to clarify the essentials of primitive style. The serious study of folk art is still in its initial phase. Within the next decade wider research, exhibition and publication will undoubtedly reconstruct many of our unknown primitive masters and clarify the sources, the characteristics and the basic style of folk art.

## DISCOVERY AND REDISCOVERY

By DOROTHY C. MILLER

IT IS a regular feature of art history that certain artists are lost to memory, later to be rediscovered and restored to popular favor in terms of the interest of the period that does the rediscovering. Among European examples are Vermeer and El Greco. During the past twenty years our knowledge of American art, particularly of the nineteenth century, has been greatly enriched by this process. The initial impetus came from an awakened interest in our native tradition and a felt need to provide a more substantial background for the contemporary development.

This interest in the American past has brought about discoveries which fall into several categories. First, there have been pure discoveries, artists previously unknown to the art historian, men like Edward Hicks, Joseph Pickett and Erastus Salisbury Field. The whole range of folk art comes under this head, for though it was not unknown its importance in the American tradition was not generally recognized until the 1930's. Even more surprising has been the rediscovery of artists who were well-known, even famous, in their lifetimes but who had been almost completely forgotten, such as Heade, Harnett and Quidor. Then there is the very large category of revaluations — artists who were never really forgotten but whose work had been out of fashion for years or had not been placed in proper perspective, such as Cole and others of the Hudson River School, and native genre painters like Bingham, Johnson and Mount.

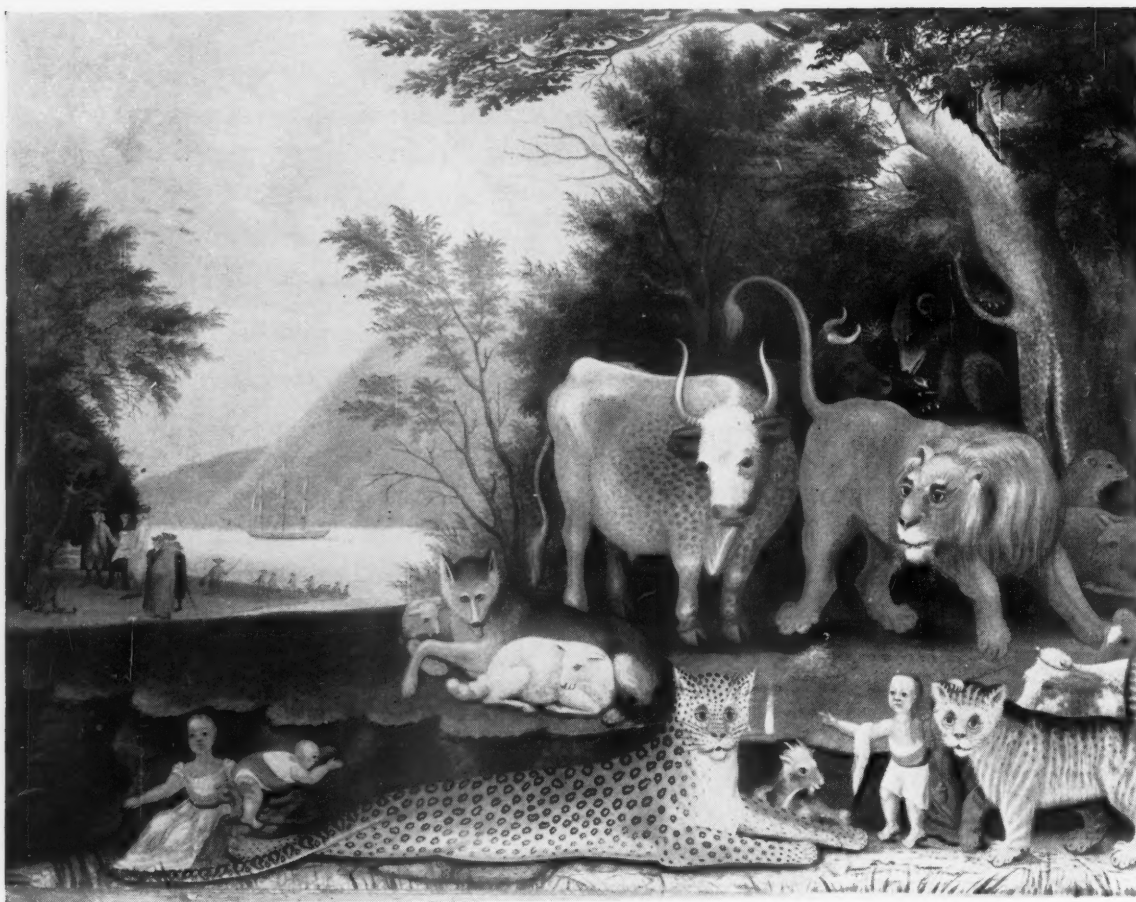
Museums and historical societies, dealers and independent scholars have been largely responsible for this research. Universities and colleges have as yet contributed little. Pioneer museum exhibitions were organized from 1930 to 1935 at the Newark Museum, the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the Worcester Art Museum. Dealers were quick to take up the search for forgotten masterpieces and have cooperated generously with the museums. Since 1935 an increasing number of exhibitions and publications has enlarged the field still further. These will be discussed in roughly chronological order within the three categories mentioned above.

Folk art has yielded the outstanding discoveries in the first category — that of the "unknown" artist, the artisan, limner or amateur whose name had not reached the pages of art history. The first important museum presentations of folk art were the Newark Museum's "American Primitives" (1930) and "American Folk Sculpture" (1931). Joseph Pickett





WILLIAM M. HARNETT: DISCARDED TREASURE  
*Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton, Massachusetts*



EDWARD HICKS: THE PEACEABLE KINGDOM  
*Albright Art Gallery, Buffalo*

came to light during the preparation for the first show and two of his four known paintings were shown, *Washington under the Council Tree* being purchased by the Newark Museum, *Coryell's Ferry* by the Whitney Museum; and a year later his masterpiece, *Manchester Valley*, entered the collection of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., and was later given to the Museum of Modern Art.

One of the greatest masters of popular painting was the Quaker preacher and coach painter Edward Hicks. A craftsman who painted his *Peaceable Kingdoms* and *Penn's Treaties* as a pastime, Hicks was never in the main current of American art. Until about 1930 he was unknown except to historical and Friends' societies in Pennsylvania towns and to Bucks County farmers to whose grandfathers he had given his paintings. In 1931 the American Folk Art Gallery in New York showed a Hicks. The first art museum to exhibit him was the Albright Art Gallery in Buffalo in 1932. Later in that year the Museum of Modern Art brought him into national prominence in its "American Folk Art" exhibition and the catalogue by Holger Cahill. The Worcester Museum acquired a Hicks in 1934 and his paintings have been sought by collectors and museums since. With his sturdy craftsmanship and touching vision, Hicks now holds a unique place in the American tradition.

Another painter of purely local reputation was brought to light by the Springfield (Massachusetts) Museum — Erastus Salisbury Field, painter of portraits and allegories, memorable for his extraordinary masterpiece, *The Monument of the American Republic*, shown at Springfield in 1942.

The rich field of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century American painting is covered so fully elsewhere in this issue that I will only say that much recent research in this field has been in the nature of rediscovery, such as the pioneer work of scholars like William Sawitzky, Henry Wilder Foote and Alan Burroughs on neglected early portraitists like Pratt, Earl, Feke, and Greenwood, or the Worcester Museum's exhibition of "Seventeenth Century Painting in New England" (1935) with a catalogue edited by Louisa Dresser.

The nineteenth century has recently yielded three remarkable rediscoveries. The extraordinary virtuosity of Harnett's illusionistic technique, the romantic control of mood in Heade's sea and landscapes, and the macabre humor of Quidor's inspirations from the native literary legend, have given us a new respect for the variety and richness of the American background. William M. Harnett came to light in 1935 when the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford purchased from the Downtown Gallery one



MARTIN J. HEADE: STORM OVER NARRAGANSETT BAY  
*Mr. Ernest Rosenfeld, New York*



GEORGE CALEB BINGHAM: FUR TRADERS DESCENDING THE MISSOURI  
*Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York*

of his fool-the-eye still-lives, *The Faithful Colt*. In 1939 the Downtown Gallery presented a dozen paintings — his first one-man show. Since then many other examples have been found and have entered museum collections. In the 1880's Harnett had been very successful, had sold canvases as high as \$10,000., exhibited for years at the National Academy, was known in London, Paris and Munich, and had a number of imitators. In the shift away from realism in the first quarter of this century he was completely forgotten, but with the revival of interest in precise technique by painters like Sheeler and O'Keeffe, the time was ripe for rediscovery of his magically rendered surfaces. Today no major survey of American art omits Harnett.

Credit for the rediscovery of John Quidor goes to the Brooklyn Museum, which in 1942 exhibited almost all of the eighteen canvases found up to this time, with a catalogue by John I. H. Baur listing other unlocated works. Unlike Harnett, Quidor never met with much success. His curious romantic figure painting ran counter to the popular taste for landscape. But for the enthusiasm of a few collectors, his remaining pictures might have been lost, as have the painted fire-engine backs with which he made his living. Today this long neglected artist appears as one of our most original native talents.

Martin J. Heade had been completely forgotten when the quality of a single painting re-established him overnight — *Storm over Narragansett Bay*, shown in 1943 by the Museum of Modern Art in "Romantic Painting in America" and published in the book of this title by James Thrall Soby and the present writer. The picture had been found shortly before by Victor Spark and A. F. Mondschein. The search that followed has brought to light a number of his paintings, and biographical data assembled by Robert G. McIntyre will be published shortly.

Harnett, Quidor and Heade are outstanding examples of artists who had dropped out of sight more or less completely. Many others have been brought to public attention by such exhibitions as the Whitney Museum's "American Genre" (1935), the Metropolitan Museum's "Life in America" (1939) and the Museum of Modern Art's "Romantic Painting in America."

Our last category includes artists who cannot be said ever to have been forgotten but who were nevertheless lost in a cloud of indifference during the *fauves* and cubist periods. The revival of interest in realism and subject, and the trends towards romantic expression and surrealism, made us see these painters in a new perspective. An early example of this re-exam-



ination of America's past was the "Homer, Ryder, Eakins" exhibition organized by Alfred H. Barr, Jr., at the Museum of Modern Art in 1930. The fifteen years which followed brought a succession of exhibitions, among the most important being the "Century of American Landscape Painting" at the Whitney Museum in 1938. This show and the catalogue by Lloyd Goodrich again brought into serious consideration such artists as Allston, Morse, Cole, Durand, Bierstadt, and many others who had been long neglected except by a few specialists; a revived interest that culminated in the Chicago Art Institute's and the Whitney Museum's "Hudson River School" show of 1945.

In the process of revaluation, one-man shows with their accompanying publications have been especially effective. George Caleb Bingham was little known in 1933 when the Metropolitan purchased his *Fur Traders Descending the Missouri*, but his position was made secure in Meyric Rogers' exhibition at the City Art Museum of St. Louis (1934) and the showing at the Museum of Modern Art (1935). Other one-man shows which resulted in revaluations of artists once popular but long neglected, were those of William Rush (1937) and Benjamin West (1938) at the Philadelphia Museum, Robert Loftin Newman at the Whitney Museum (1935), Eastman Johnson (1940) and Mount (1942) at the Brooklyn Museum, Thomas Cole at the Albany Institute (1941), Worthington Whittredge at the Macbeth Gallery (1944) and John F. Kensett at the Old Print Shop (1945).

Of all these artists who have been brought back into the focus of national consciousness in recent years, it seems unlikely that any will sink again into the unconscious of our tradition. Some of them will certainly grow in stature as further research reveals them more fully. Undoubtedly others await rediscovery and revaluation.

## THE EXHIBITION AS AN AID TO RESEARCH

By JOHN I. H. BAUR

THAT the exhibition with its didactic paraphernalia of catalogue and labels is an effective tool for research has been so amply demonstrated in recent years that it scarcely needs elaboration. In the first place, the research that goes into its preparation — and a good exhibition sometimes requires as long and thorough research as a book — is in itself an important contribution to scholarship. More than one art book has been the out-

growth of exhibition research. The exhibition and its attendant publicity almost always bring to light unknown works in the same field. Its special value in permitting firsthand observation and comparison of a body of related work is obvious. This is something that no amount of comparison by photographs, notes or memory can accomplish, as was demonstrated by the shows of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century New England painting at the Worcester Art Museum. And the exhibition catalogue if it is well done can be a permanent contribution to knowledge. In many cases, such catalogues are the only monographs on important American artists and periods. Whether the scholarly appraisal is done in advance and published at the time of the show (the usual method), or whether the show is first assembled, then studied, and the results published later (as in the Worcester Museum's two exhibitions already mentioned, or the Addison Gallery's John Greenwood show) is a matter of choice. When the problem under investigation is unusually difficult, the latter system has advantages which outweigh its obvious disadvantage, that of not providing the visitor with a guide to the purpose and significance of the show.

More vital than these questions of mechanics is the problem of the essential purpose of the scholarly exhibition and how it can best be realized. Or rather, it is a matter of examining different and at times conflicting purposes, for there are at least three kinds of exhibitions with scholarly pretensions. They might be called the space fillers, the interpretative shows and the factual shows.

The space fillers are happily dwindling in numbers. They are the desperate exhibitions which every harassed museum curator has occasionally thrown together when all other plans for filling a gallery have collapsed and he is faced with the alternative of bare walls or the shell collection in the basement. They do no particular harm if they are treated as what they are. But in many cases they have been pretentiously decked with catalogues giving measurements, histories and other scholarly paraphernalia, hurriedly and inaccurately put together as a smoke screen for the inherent weakness of the show. Some exhibitions of this kind have been assembled by dealers and accepted by small museums lacking facilities for research. This is no indictment of dealers' shows as a whole; the sin has been committed by museums also, while many dealers' exhibitions have been based on the most rigid standards of scholarship. The point is that an exhibition which promises more than it delivers, or delivers false goods, does positive harm to the field it invades.

The interpretative and factual shows, honestly executed, are on the

credit side of the ledger. The first is aimed at interpreting the significance of already known material, the second at discovering new facts without necessarily evaluating their meaning. Obviously, the two overlap continually. There are few fact-finding shows which do not suggest, implicitly or explicitly, a broader significance than the sum of the data discovered. There are few interpretative shows which do not present new material or new facts concerning known material.

The interpretative show is rewarding in direct proportion to the extent to which it concerns itself with basic art ideas. At its most superficial it is the familiar "subject" show — "The Dance in Art," "The Child in Art," "Old Houses in Art," etc. While of interest to balletomanes, mothers or antiquarians, such shows are essentially extra-esthetic in purpose and are almost invariably weakened by the inclusion of inferior material selected for its subject only.

The subject show is valid if the subject has some relation to the thoughts and aspirations of a period. Landscape, for instance, is just as external a theme as the dance, but when the Whitney Museum put on its exhibition "A Century of American Landscape Painting," it did so presumably because the subject was one which had absorbed several generations of American painters, not because the museum hoped to entice nature-lovers. In such a case, the subject becomes a convenient frame within which a more or less homogeneous segment of art can be conveniently isolated for study and comparison.

The nature of the interpretative show is to expound through the selection of objects and through catalogues and similar adjuncts the critical opinions of its progenitor. Thus the more it deals with "pure" art principles, the more controversial it becomes. Its function is not only to teach but to stimulate criticism, both adverse and sympathetic. A history of landscape painting is not as purely interpretative as, for example, the Museum of Modern Art's "Romantic Painting in America." Critics of the first may disagree with the selection, but cannot very well claim that it is not landscape painting; the critics of the latter can (and did in numbers) proclaim, "This is not what I conceive to be romantic painting." Such disagreement is inevitable when romanticism is considered as a philosophy of which art is only one expression. Conceivably the theme could be presented on a more securely demonstrable basis if the touchstone were concrete elements of design within the picture (as in Woelflin's analysis of seventeenth-century art) rather than their philosophical sources. To determine pictorial forms common to a large body of romantic painting and



WILLIAM RUSH: CHARITY  
*Grand Lodge, Free and Accepted Masons, Philadelphia*



JOHN QUIDOR: THE MONEY DIGGERS  
*Mrs. Sheldon Keck, Brooklyn, New York*



to use these as a test within a given period is safer, perhaps sounder, though also less rewarding in that it does not search so far into the basic springs of human action. The interpretative show, therefore, requires both convictions and courage. The more personal it is, the fewer the people who will agree with its findings. It is its nature that the more it seeks for fundamental truths, the more its author sticks out his professional neck.

The factual show is certainly safer and may sound a good deal duller, but it has its dangers and excitements also. That it often involves critical evaluations and therefore overlaps the interpretative type has already been pointed out. Nevertheless, its main function is clear: to discover and present new material, which will shed further light on a man, a movement, a technique or any other aspect of art. It contributes directly to the sheer mass of known artifacts and furnishes the information necessary to relate these to others of the field or period. It is one of the mining operations which provide raw material for the interpretative critic.

The one-man show is probably the commonest and one of the most rewarding in this category. American art has more than its share of forgotten or inadequately known artists who have been stranded in oblivion by the retreating tides of fashion or who never did get launched. Eastman Johnson was an example of the former, John Quidor of the latter, to cite two whom the present author attempted to re-float through exhibitions. The memorial exhibition and the retrospective showing of a living artist's work belong in the same class.

The one-man exhibition has the obvious virtue of assembling a sufficient body of work to make possible a fair evaluation of the artist and to trace his development. If it is to serve the critic honestly, it must keep this end in mind, even though adhering to it may involve a voluntary sacrifice of quality and popularity. There are few painters whose works are of uniform excellence throughout their lives or who have not at times produced paintings which are unsympathetic to later taste. Eastman Johnson's present-day reputation, for example, rests on his Nantucket scenes and a handful of other paintings in the same vein, which constitute his creative aspect and place him in the main line of development from Mount to Homer. But at the same time he occasionally produced sentimental genre paintings, which were among his most popular works during his lifetime, although they now appear empty and pretentious. One is sorely tempted to omit such pictures and select only canvases which will have a reasonable chance with the modern critic. But to do so is willfully to falsify the artist's character. It is a sin of commission as well as omission, for

such works often exert a devious influence on the more creative pictures. To include them is to give a rounded understanding of the painter's final achievement.

The factual show is at its best when it deals with a subject which is small enough to be covered in reasonably complete fashion within the compass of the exhibition. A "History of American Painting" in a gallery that holds fifty pictures results not in fact, but fancy. Nevertheless, it is often possible to extend the scope of the factual show to a school or a movement without doing the subject violence. If the exhibition is to remain primarily factual, however, the school or movement which it investigates must be well defined. The show itself will, of course, help to do this. Such exhibitions are needed because the names of even well-known movements have a way of changing meaning with use. It is important, therefore, to examine in exhibitions, as the Art Institute of Chicago has recently done, the original significance of such loosely used terms as the Hudson River School. In other cases, it may be the genesis of a movement, rather than its full scope, which is in question. The show, "Leaders of American Impressionism," at the Brooklyn Museum, for instance, was designed to investigate the time and manner of the movement's introduction in this country, not to trace its later course. One of the exciting elements in the show of a group or school is the unsuspected nugget which it may uncover in unlikely and even well-worked ground. Thus a roundup of Massachusetts primitives by the Springfield Museum under the title "Somebody's Ancestors," brought to light a painter of unusual interest in the person of Erastus Salisbury Field.

These are only a few of the profitable fields of inquiry for the factual show. American art history still has much unexplored territory before it. As this is brought to light through factual research, so also will there be new opportunities for the interpretative critic in re-evaluating the changing pattern of our art. If the exhibition is to realize its full potentialities in this task, it must be used with an understanding of its dual requirements: to be factual it must be accurate and honestly inclusive; to interpret it must be perceptive and honestly selective. Within this broad frame its possibilities are manifold.

## THE DEALER'S PART IN RESEARCH

By ROBERT G. MCINTYRE

IT IS a pleasure to jot down some thoughts on how the dealer can help research in American art, especially research undertaken by museums. The dealer, let it be understood at the beginning, has already been of no little help to the museum in various ways, a fact which the latter has not been slow to appreciate. At the same time it is a matter of common acceptance that the museum has helped the dealer who, in turn, is grateful.

The point is to what extent the dealer can broaden the scope of his service to the museum, to render it the greatest possible help in its research, and to provide it with informative data, whenever this is consistent with his business policy and his relations with his clientele. The latter may on occasion render it obligatory on his part to withhold certain information from the museum. On this point I shall touch later. It will be necessary at the outset to cultivate a practice of mutual forbearance, of give-and-take, to the end that both dealer and museum may arrive at a better understanding of each other's problems, thus making for fuller cooperation toward a common objective — the advancement of knowledge and appreciation of American art.

How, then, can the dealer *extend* the scope of his usefulness? Usefulness in this present instance may best be defined as "information," for that, generally, is what the museum asks of the dealer. Now the dealer, if he has been in business for many years, accumulates a really vast store of this valuable commodity. He is in continual touch with works of art, and with people who own them. He is constantly on the lookout for pictures of good quality. Every day works of all kinds are brought to him, and his knowledge and experience are called upon to decide whether he should handle them. Of all this accumulated information, the greater part is at the disposal not only of the museum but of students and those having allied interests.

As a usual procedure the dealer is careful, even meticulous, in ascertaining as far as is humanly possible, all the known facts concerning the wares he buys and offers for sale to his clients; he has to be if he cares about his reputation! Naturally mistakes are made but they are the normal blind spots in any human endeavor. Of late years the dealer has been more exact in recording facts connected with his pictures, facts which formerly may have been more or less haphazardly recorded, or only mentally noted. As an example, take the case of an old painting that needs attention —

lining, restoration, cleaning, and so on. Today the dealer first photographs the painting, thus preserving a record of its condition before anything is done to it. Often a notation is made on the stretcher of the restorer's name and the date the work was done. If any helpful information appears on the back of the old canvas, as sometimes happens, this also is photographed or otherwise noted. If the painting has an ascertainable history (some do not), this goes into the dealer's files; also where and when it was exhibited or reproduced. In addition, not infrequently x-ray and other laboratory methods (not in themselves conclusive, however) are resorted to as a help in the matter of a picture's authenticity. To assemble such details frequently involves much research on the part of the dealer; and while he does this primarily for his own benefit and that of his clients, nevertheless, here is ready-made, time-saving information for the museum.

There is another item which formerly was given little or no attention by either dealer or museum — the names of the manufacturers of or dealers in artists' materials, so frequently stamped, with their addresses, on the backs of old canvases. Offhand such identification would seem to be of only minor significance, but as a matter of fact, it can often help to date a picture and thus throw light on its authenticity. For the past few years I have made a record of a number of such markings, especially when old paintings have to be lined, thus concealing these names. Once more, here is grist for the museum's mill.

And there is another service that can be performed by the dealer. Take the case of a family which through inheritance owns important paintings that are unrecorded. It may be unlikely that these pictures will ever be disposed of through the regular market channels, yet the fact that they exist should be recorded. If the dealer who knows about them feels that they are of value to the history of American art, and that the artists are likely subjects for research, I think he should acquaint the museum of their existence even though he may feel obliged to request that, for the time being, the information be regarded as confidential.

Now, the dealer can be of further assistance without much inconvenience to himself. Most often the museum takes the initiative in that it *asks* the dealer for certain facts which it may not have occurred to him to offer voluntarily. If the dealer has a fairly clear understanding of the research purposes and activities of the museum, and if he feels that he has information unquestionably of value to the latter, I then think he might *voluntarily* pass it on while the thought is still fresh in his mind, without waiting to be asked.



These few suggested instances do not by any means exhaust the usefulness of the dealer. There are other ways in which he can help, some of them, maybe, just thoughts that pop into his head, or "leads" that might profitably be pursued by the museum in its research. Let me add, however, that while the dealer is willing to do as I have suggested, there is no thought on his part to spend his waking hours thinking up helpful hints, many of which might turn out to be totally irrelevant. And this suggests a way in which the museum can help. If the museum would feel free to furnish the dealer with a list of those artists now in the hopper, or likely to be, he would then know when to give information and when not to bother. Another time-saver.

Earlier I hinted at the dealer's possible reservations, that is, information which he considers his own peculiar property, which constitutes a part of his capital assets, and which may also concern his clients, who must always be reckoned with. Consider the case of the client who requests or even insists that his name be not mentioned in connection with his purchases (having his own good reasons therefor). To the museum this information may be the one thing it wants to round out the history of a picture, but shall the dealer divulge it? Certainly not. Such secrecy, however, is usually only temporary, for sooner or later the knowledge becomes available, the source often being the client himself! Again, the dealer has a secret which he jealously guards from other dealers. He likes, and naturally, to feel a sort of superiority over his competitors, and as long as he can, he will keep this special knowledge within his own breast, even denying it to the museum. Now the latter *must* understand that such circumstances, though rare, *do* exist, and should exercise forbearance. Granting these infrequent exceptions, I can see no good reason whatsoever why the dealer and the museum should not work together to accomplish an even greater degree of cooperation and mutual helpfulness than ever before. But — neither must be demanding.

# Institutions and Projects



## THE AMERICAN ART RESEARCH COUNCIL

By ROSALIND IRVINE

THE American Art Research Council was established in order to stimulate a more widespread interest in research in American art. Almost every important European artist has been the subject of intensive scholarly study. Critical estimates have been written and catalogues raisonnés of their work have been made. But until recently there was little attempt to give the same careful study to more than a handful of American artists, and the available knowledge on many outstanding figures was fragmentary and often inaccurate. No concerted effort had been made to stem the tide of forgeries which had been flooding the market for years, and with forgeries of even recent men appearing, the situation was becoming serious.

Taking these facts into consideration, the Whitney Museum of American Art proposed in 1942 that museums, acting in cooperation, should establish a central agency to deal with these problems. In April of that year representatives of fifteen leading museums met and agreed to establish the American Art Research Council. An Advisory Committee was formed, which has since been expanded to include representatives of thirty museums and universities, and a general program was drawn up. From the beginning the Council maintained close relations with colleges and universities, and the College Art Association, which cordially endorsed the plan, appointed a committee to act as a liaison and consultative group with the Council. A committee of scholars and experts was also formed to act in an advisory capacity in matters of research.

The main functions of the Council are to carry on and promote research in American art, to act as a clearinghouse for information on subjects and methods of research, to advise college students and other workers in the field, to form records of the works of American artists of the past and the present, and to assist museums with problems of authenticity.

In its own research program the Council has specialized particularly in American art of the last hundred years. Notable work has been done by American scholars in the colonial field, but our art of the last century

has only recently begun to be studied intensively. This period, which witnessed such tremendous growth in the economic and cultural life of the country, and from which some of our most outstanding artists have emerged, is one of the most important epochs in our art history. The sources of information on it are abundant, and as we come closer to our own time, more and more personal material on the artists is available.

For its initial project, therefore, the Council has undertaken to study fifty artists of the past, either nineteenth-century or early twentieth, on whom little work has been done, searching books, magazines and exhibition and auction catalogues for reproductions and references, tracing pictures which have disappeared, examining them and securing data, photographing them, and putting the resulting information into systematic catalogue form. In addition, one hundred living painters and sculptors, chosen by vote of the Advisory Committee, have been asked to make lists of their works. On a selected number of these living men the Council is making complete catalogues, in collaboration with the artists themselves.

All museums and many private owners have been asked for essential data about works which they own by the artists being studied, and their response has been most generous. The eventual result will be complete records of many of the outstanding American artists of the present and the past — records which in the future should not only forestall questions of authenticity but furnish invaluable information for the annals of American art.

Opinions as to authenticity are given by the Council, but due to limitations of staff it has been necessary to restrict this service to museums and colleges. Since one of the Council's main principles is to rely upon the best expert opinion wherever found, pictures are submitted to outside specialists if available, and members of the staff give opinions only when qualified to pass on the particular artist. When necessary the Council assists specialists with laboratory examination. As a guide to scientific photographic material already in existence, a catalogue is being compiled of all such material in museums and elsewhere, including x-ray, ultra-violet and infra-red photographs.

Another important activity of the Council is to act as a central bureau of information on American research. Colleges have been referring students for advice in the choice of subjects for theses, and the staff stands ready to give them every assistance possible in locating source material and in methods of research. All colleges and universities are asked to register annually the subjects of graduate and undergraduate theses. The

Council has attempted to keep in touch with all research workers in the American field, securing information about their projects, in this way forming a catalogue which enables it to help students avoid duplication of effort.

By its nature the Council is a cooperative enterprise and relies on the assistance of museums, colleges, dealers, artists and private collectors, all of whom have been most generous in contributing their time and knowledge.

## THE FRICK ART REFERENCE LIBRARY

By ETHELWYN MANNING

THE Frick Art Reference Library was founded in 1920 in memory of Henry Clay Frick by his daughter, Miss Helen C. Frick, for the purpose of furthering the study of art in America. Although its scope covers European and American painting, drawing, sculpture and illuminated manuscripts, its collection of material on American art has received especial study and attention.

Its printed material includes standard works on American art, works of general reference, genealogies, art periodicals, publications of historical societies and museums, and a large file of catalogues of sales, exhibitions, and public and private collections. All this material is card-indexed. The reference files are for use in the Library, but there is quite a large collection of duplicate material which the Library is glad to lend.

A special feature of the Library is its large collection of photographs of works of art, with accompanying documentation. Next to examination of the work itself, photographs are the most satisfactory method of studying paintings, far superior to other reproductive processes. Since its founding the Library has carried on photographing expeditions in sections of the country where important paintings are owned either in private or public collections. The eastern seaboard from Maine to Georgia, Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio and Louisiana are among the states visited. This has been supplemented by acquisition of many more photographs from all kinds of sources, until the Library's photographic collection now numbers 300,000 items of all schools. American art from its beginnings through the nineteenth century is more fully covered, we believe, than by any other library. One of the largest and most complete groups is that of early American painting, especially portraiture.



As complete a history as possible of each work of art is obtained from the owner. A reference worker then compiles all the available information under the following headings: name of artist; title, or name of subject if a portrait; material, size, medium and signature; date; engravings; reproductions; exhibitions; collections; description, including biographical data on the subject if a portrait; color notes; discussions of attribution; notes of replicas, copies, etc.; bibliography; sources of information. Essential published information is quoted rather than being merely referred to, and all this data is filed with the photograph, giving in compact and convenient form all necessary information on the work of art.

Although the Library does not attribute or evaluate works of art, this information can often be supplied from its reference files and from the trained observation of staff members. Whenever possible, opinions as to attribution are obtained from the many specialists on American art who use the Library, and are made part of the record.

The following examples may be of interest. In a recent exhibition a portrait of Simon Bolívar was listed as American School. A member of our staff was able to attribute it to the almost unknown painter, F. M. Drexel, because of its similarity to other portraits of Bolívar which she had photographed in the home of a descendant of the artist. Again in a recent sale two miniatures given as American School interested a staff member because she felt certain they were by Nathaniel Rogers. We asked permission to photograph them and in removing them from their frames found a slip of paper with a note in an old-fashioned hand, "N. Rogers c. 1820." Recently an historical society sent us an old engraving after a portrait by J. W. Jarvis, requesting biographical information on the subject. Through our card index we found a photograph of the original portrait, but attributed by its previous owner to Thomas Sully. With the present owner's permission, the attribution will be corrected.

The Library also serves as a depository of genealogical records. Our early photography in the South and in New England was timed opportunely in that many of these homes have since changed ownership and their portraits have been dispersed.

Although our Library is highly specialized, it is interesting to note the wide range of subjects being studied, and the variety of its users. There are authors, writing on many phases of art; college professors and students from all parts of the country; genealogists; artists commissioned to make portraits of famous persons; advertisers, fashion designers, and representatives from the motion picture companies. Private collectors, dealers, and

museum directors and curators often come to check on the history of a work of art before deciding on its acquisition, and museum workers and dealers use our photograph files in planning exhibitions.

Whatever service the Library has been able to render to its public has been made possible not only through the generosity and vision of its Director and through the scholarship and keen interest of the members of its staff, but also through the cooperation of the art specialists who have studied in the Library. I am happy to have this opportunity to thank these friends who have helped us so generously whenever we have sought their advice.

## THE AMERICAN ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY

By CLIFFORD K. SHIPTON

THE person interested in research in the fine arts is likely to remember the local or regional historical society by its dusty museum of bugs, stones, and similar relics of natural history. Of late years, however, these societies have generally divorced physical science and courted the fine arts, with the result that many of them have fine little collections which no student of American art can afford to ignore. Many of the great discoveries of the future today lie, appreciated but unevaluated, in such small collections.

The American Antiquarian Society, the oldest of our national research organizations, has like its smaller sisters been undergoing the transition from anthropology to art during the past generation. Its Library, at Worcester, Massachusetts, affords excellent facilities for research in the history of the earlier phases of American art, and its correspondence with students of art runs into hundreds of letters each year. Although the Society has avoided the field of museum activity, its Library does contain a small collection of early American portraits carefully chosen for their interest. These include such widely known and controversial pieces as the Thomas Smith self-portrait and the Bush family likenesses attributed to McKay and Pratt, as well as good examples of the work of Smibert, Pelham, Copley, Greenwood, and Gullager. Of the works of the American engravers listed by Stauffer, the Library has one of the largest collections, and down through the Currier and Ives period its collection of American lithography is the strongest. In the case of David Claypoole Johnston it has the original drawings as well as the prints. The Library has several collections of manuscripts relating in one way or another to art, among them being the later

years of the correspondence of the late Frank W. Bayley. Its collection of American art catalogues is one of the best, and is supplemented by the remarkable collection of reference material gathered by Thomas E. Kirby. This covers all American sales of paintings between 1880 and 1923, and indexes them by artist, subject, consignor, price, and purchaser. The Library also attempts to obtain all secondary works relating to the history of American art and the bulletins and similar publications of all American art museums.

The history of American art is for the American Antiquarian Society only one division of the general field of early American history, but the presence in its Library of material relating to other facets of life enhances its usefulness to the student of art. The publications of the Society include a number of important monographs on the history of art. It is an organization which the people of the world of the fine arts might well know better.

## THE ARCHIVES OF AMERICAN ART

By CARL ZIGROSSER

THE Archives of American Art at the Philadelphia Museum of Art are a repository where artists' letters and papers, and all documents which throw light upon the artists' lives and opinions, are preserved. Much of this material, owing to its contemporary character, is apt to be neglected or thrown away; yet it is important source material both in the present and in the future. In establishing such an archive, the Philadelphia Museum of Art had in mind a twofold purpose: to focus attention on the desirability of preserving artists' papers, and to provide a safe and enduring place where such documents will be kept. The Archives are not limited to material relating to living artists or to those recently deceased, which naturally are the most abundant and available. Letters and papers of American artists of the past, and of foreign artists of the past and present, are included as bearing on the art life of our time.

Nor is the scope limited to personal expression by artists. The documentation of general movements and trends in American art is important. Material relating to artists' organizations and societies, epoch-making exhibitions such as the Armory Show, or the emergence of regional schools, is worth assembling as an indication of changes in taste and critical opinion.

Owing to the nature of the archive, its potentiality is at present greater than its actuality. Contacts have been made and promises given of full cooperation from artists, dealers, collectors, and critics. The file now contains over a thousand documents since it was first started in 1943. It is impossible to enumerate them in detail, but they relate chiefly to contemporary artists, both American and foreign. The collection is housed in the Print Room of the Museum, and is available to scholars at all times, and to the public in occasional exhibitions of general appeal. The committee for solicitation of material includes Royal Cortissoz, Mrs. Juliana R. Force, R. Sturgis Ingersoll, Miss Antoinette Kraushaar, Rockwell Kent, Henri Marceau, Walter Pach, and Carroll S. Tyson, with Carl Zigrosser as Secretary.

## A DICTIONARY OF AMERICAN ARTISTS TO 1860

By CHARLES E. BAKER

THE New-York Historical Society is presently engaged in the compilation of *A Dictionary of American Artists to 1860*. Every painter, illustrator, cartoonist, sculptor, silhouettist, engraver, and lithographer who worked in America during or prior to 1860 or was born here not later than 1840 will be listed if the record of his career can be found. Sources being surveyed include: pre-1860 exhibition catalogues, newspaper advertisements or notices, city and business directories, auction and dealers' catalogues, wills and inventories of estates, signed works of art, and personal communications concerning unrecorded artists, as well as the standard reference books and monographs.

An outgrowth of 1440 *Early American Portrait Artists (1663-1860)*, compiled and published by the WPA Historical Records Survey in 1940 and expanded in manuscript to twice its original size before the project was discontinued, the Historical Society's publication will comprise several times the number of entries of that preliminary volume and embrace workers in every graphic and plastic medium irrespective of their subject matter. This promises to be by far the most comprehensive survey of early American artists, not only in general scope but also within any one of the limited categories for which similar biographical dictionaries have already been compiled. Dr. George C. Groce, who directed the WPA compilation, is serving the Society in an advisory capacity in the preparation of the revised and expanded work.



The entries, arranged alphabetically by names of artists, will provide as much of the following information about each artist as can be obtained: his full name, where and when he was born and died, the places where he worked and exhibited and the inclusive dates of his sojourns there, the media in which he worked, the types of subjects he portrayed, and the source or sources of each item of information. A bibliography of the sources cited, and chronological and place indexes will increase the usefulness of the compilation.

The New-York Historical Society will welcome information about any pre-1860 American artist likely to escape the dragnet of its research. Because of the limited staff available and the scattered nature of the sources, the date of publication will depend in part on the initiative of local antiquarians and other interested persons in providing the necessary data for their own localities.

## AN INDEX TO REPRODUCTIONS OF AMERICAN PAINTINGS

By ISABEL MONRO

**A**N INDEX to reproductions of American paintings is being compiled by Isabel Monroe, of the H. W. Wilson Company. The plan is to index such reproductions from a selected list of general histories of art, histories of American art, monographs on individual painters, and catalogues of one-man exhibitions. Catalogues of annual exhibitions of museums, catalogues of permanent collections, and periodicals not indexed by *The Art Index* are also being considered. Although the inclusion of exhibition catalogues would increase the work immeasurably, the resulting list of titles would probably justify such an extensive undertaking.

Reproductions will be indexed under the name of painter with titles of paintings, followed, wherever possible, by symbols showing in what museum the original may be found. References will be made from alternative titles to the best-known title, under which the location of reproductions will be given. The paintings will also be listed under titles and under subjects.

The list of books under consideration will gladly be sent to anyone interested in adding titles to it, especially catalogues of well-illustrated exhibitions.

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Required by the Acts of Congress of August 24, 1912, and March 3, 1933, of Art in America, published quarterly at Springfield, Mass., for October 1, 1945

State of Massachusetts }  
County of Hampden } ss.

Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared John D. Pond, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the Publisher and Manager of ART IN AMERICA and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the act of August 24, 1912, as amended by the Act of March 3, 1933, embodied in section 537, Postal Laws and Regulations, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, and business manager are:

#### Name of —

Publisher, JOHN D. POND  
Editor, JEAN LIPMAN  
Business Manager, JOHN D. POND

#### Post Office address —

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11 Andrew St., Springfield, Mass.

2. That the owner is JULIA MUNSON SHERMAN, 255 Kings Highway, Westport, Conn.

3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: None.

4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him.

JOHN D. POND, Publisher, Business Manager

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 10th day of September, 1945.

EVA A. BROWN

Notary Public, Hampden County, Mass.  
(My commission expires November 28, 1946.)

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